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Vol. 5

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**BLOCKADE**  
ENTERTAINMENT

# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT Kris

#1

OF 5



**Volume Five  
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DONNY TRAN

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& LUIS GUERRERO (pg. 1)

- colors -

JAYMES REED

- letters -

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- design & production -

COMICRAFT | BLAMBOT | ROBIN SHEAR

- fonts by -

Executive Assistant: Iris created by:  
David Wohl, Brad Foxhoven & Michael Turner

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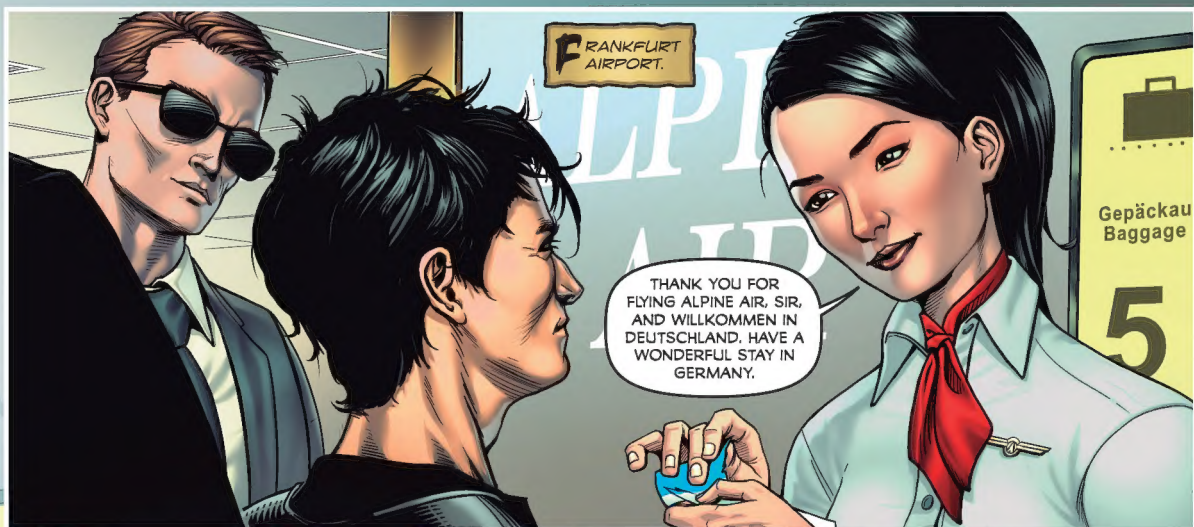
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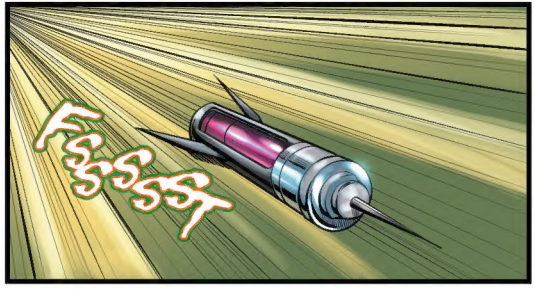
















I could watch  
this footage on a  
loop all day.

KRAAKK

UNNNNGGH!

The way she throws her body  
into the line of fire for a client is  
breathtaking. She's so loyal and  
valiant...and fearless.



WHOK

It's like she's not  
scared of anything.



Not even death.



NNNGHH!



And when someone crosses  
her, she's ruthless, aggressive.  
Aggression has it's uses.

WHOKK





WHAT'S GOING ON? AND WHO IN THE BLEEDING HELL ARE YOU?!

YOUR NEW **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**. YOUR MANAGER WAS NOT CONVINCED YOU HAD ENOUGH PROTECTION AND CALLED FOR BACK-UP.

**I AM THE BACK-UP.**



**ARNOLD** SENT YOU? THAT CHEEKY BASTARD! HE NEVER TOLD ME I WAS BEING FOLLOWED AROUND BY SOME STEWARDESS!

RELAYING MEMOS IS NOT MY DEPARTMENT. I AM HERE TO MAKE SURE YOU ARRIVE AT YOUR NEXT CONCERT IN ONE PIECE.



WELL, YOU DIDN'T STOP ME FROM GETTING **ELECTROCUTED**. DID YOU? AND WHEN YOU SEE **ARNOLD**, YOU TELL THAT SON OF A--

**TRENT!**  
TRENT HAUNTWELL!



SORRY, LOVE...MEDIA CALLS. MAYBE YOU CAN FETCH MY **LUGGAGE** WHILE I HANDLE--



WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE ATTACKER?

WAS HE HUMAN?

00:05:01

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING FOR TRENT HAUNTWELL?

DO YOU WORK FOR **MAGNI**?





LOS ANGELES.

AS YOU CAN SEE, **MISTER BRUNSON**, WE SPARE NO EXPENSE HERE AT **MAGNI GLOBAL**. IT'S WHY WE'RE THE LEADER IN WORLDWIDE SECURITY.

IS THAT SO, **DR. ZYRA**?



ABSOLUTELY. WE HAVE, TO BORROW A SPORTS ANALOGY, A STACKED ROSTER. OUR SELECTION OF AGENTS IS UNMATCHED IN THE INDUSTRY.

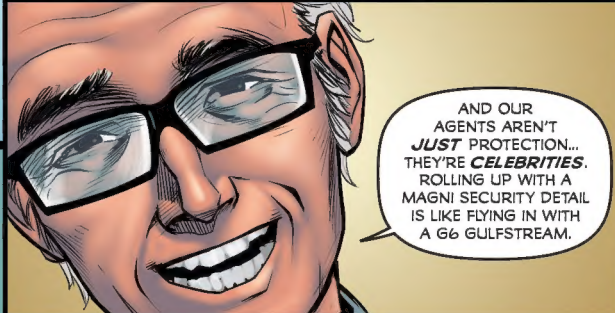


SINCE THE ATTACKS IN SYDNEY AND SAN DIEGO\*, PERSONAL SECURITY HAS BECOME THE HOTTEST MARKET ON THE PLANET.

OUR CLIENTS DON'T KNOW WHERE THE NEXT THREAT IS GOING TO COME FROM...THEY WANT TO BE PREPARED.

CLICK

\*EDITOR'S NOTE:  
SEE FATHOM  
VOLUME 6.



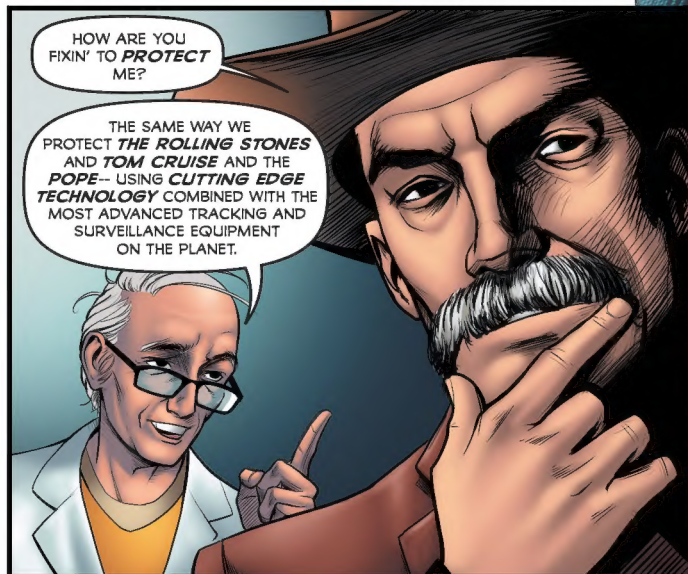
AND OUR AGENTS AREN'T **JUST** PROTECTION... THEY'RE **CELEBRITIES**. ROLLING UP WITH A MAGNI SECURITY DETAIL IS LIKE FLYING IN WITH A G6 GULFSTREAM.



I ALREADY HAVE PRIVATE JETS, DOC. AND **YACHTS**. AND MORE CARS THAN I CAN SHAKE A STICK AT.

WHAT I NEED IS THE **BEST**. MY OIL COMPANY MAKES ME THE SIXTH RICHEST MAN IN AMERICA, WHICH MEANS I GOT A TARGET ON MY BACK LIKE THE BROAD SIDE OF A BARN.





HOW ARE YOU  
FIXIN' TO **PROTECT**  
ME?

THE SAME WAY WE  
PROTECT **THE ROLLING STONES**  
AND **TOM CRUISE** AND THE  
**POPE**-- USING **CUTTING EDGE**  
**TECHNOLOGY** COMBINED WITH THE  
MOST ADVANCED TRACKING AND  
SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT  
ON THE PLANET.



WE HAVE TOYS EVEN THE  
**NSA** DOESN'T KNOW EXIST.  
OUR UNIQUE PARTNERSHIPS  
AFFORD US A LEG UP ON  
THE COMPETITION.



THE WORLD IS A  
DANGEROUS PLACE, MR.  
BRUNSON. WITH OUR AGENTS  
AND TECH, YOUR SAFETY  
IS **GUARANTEED**.

STER

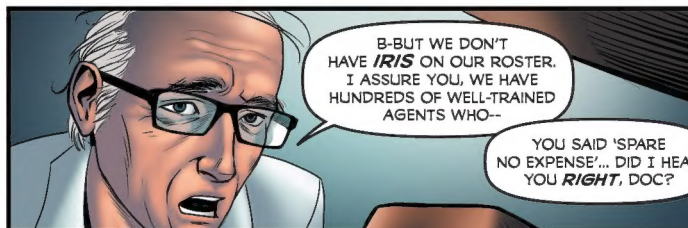
Car Pursuit

Jet Explodes Over Pacific

AIRPORT ATTACK!!!

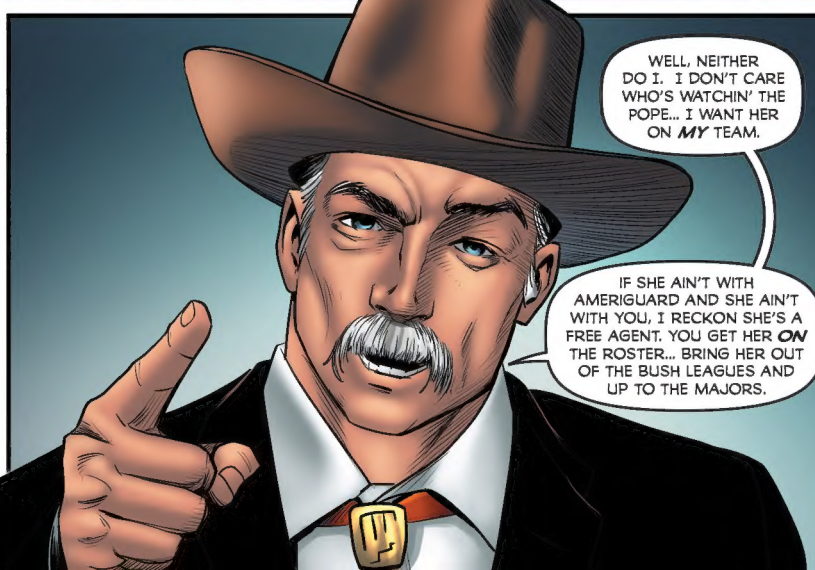
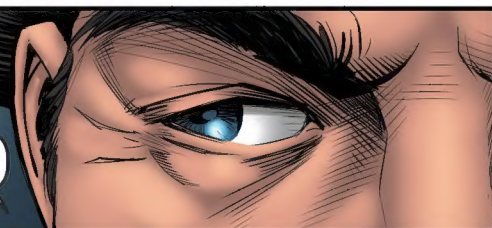


NOW **THIS** IS  
GUMPTION. NO NEED  
FOR FANCY GADGETS: JUST  
SOME OLD SCHOOL, COUNTRY  
ASS KICKIN'. **THIS** IS  
WHO I WANT.



B-BUT WE DON'T  
HAVE **IRIS** ON OUR ROSTER.  
I ASSURE YOU, WE HAVE  
HUNDREDS OF WELL-TRAINED  
AGENTS WHO--

YOU SAID 'SPARE  
NO EXPENSE'... DID I HEAR  
YOU **RIGHT**, DOC?



WELL, NEITHER  
DO I. I DON'T CARE  
WHO'S WATCHIN' THE  
POPE... I WANT HER  
ON **MY** TEAM.

IF SHE AIN'T WITH  
AMERIGUARD AND SHE AIN'T  
WITH YOU, I RECKON SHE'S A  
FREE AGENT. YOU GET HER **ON**  
THE ROSTER... BRING HER OUT  
OF THE BUSH LEAGUES AND  
UP TO THE MAJORS.



AND I'LL  
**TRIPLE** YOUR  
FEE.



A woman with dark hair tied back, looking down with a somber expression. She has a large, colorful tattoo on her back featuring a green dragon-like creature with yellow and red accents. The background is dark and misty.

I AM NOT A TEENAGER ANYMORE.  
I AM STILL IN MY PRIME, BUT MY  
MUSCLES ARE NOT AS FLEXIBLE AS THEY  
ONCE WERE. MY JOINTS ARE A LITTLE  
STIFFER, REACTION TIME A LITTLE SLOWER.

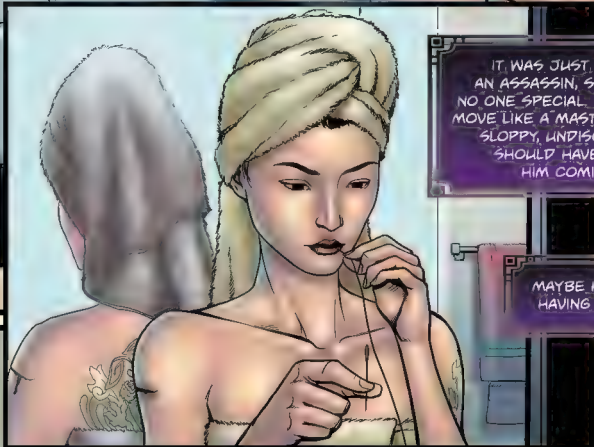
I USED TO BE  
FAST. I COULD CATCH A  
SHURIKEN IN MID-FLIGHT  
LIKE I WAS GRABBING  
A FRISBEE. SWORDS  
AND SPEARS MOVED  
IN SLOW-MOTION.

I WOULD GO ENTIRE ROUNDS  
IN HIGH-LEVEL SPARRING  
WITHOUT GETTING TOUCHED.





TOPAY, I GOT CAUGHT. IT WAS NOT BY A SHAOLIN MONK OR SOME ELITE BLACK-BELT WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.



IT WAS JUST A GUY. AN ASSASSIN, SURE, BUT NO ONE SPECIAL. HE DID NOT MOVE LIKE A MASTER. HE WAS SLOPPY, UNDISCIPLINED. SHOULD HAVE SEEN HIM COMING.

MAYBE HE WAS JUST HAVING A GOOD DAY



OR I WAS HAVING A BAD ONE

BZZT  
BZZT



90% Isopropyl Rubbing Alcohol  
Warning: Flammable  
Use only in fumes may  
16 FL OZ (1 PT) 473 mL



<Request to meet at Nagashima plaza, Los Angeles 3:00pm, Dr. Zyra - Contract to be negotiated>

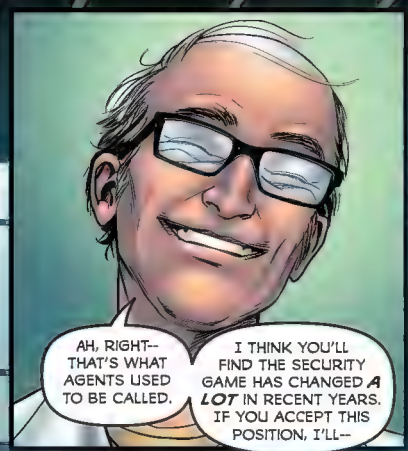




I'M DR. ZYRA. AND YOU MUST BE *IRIS*. MY APOLOGIES FOR THE SECURITY...

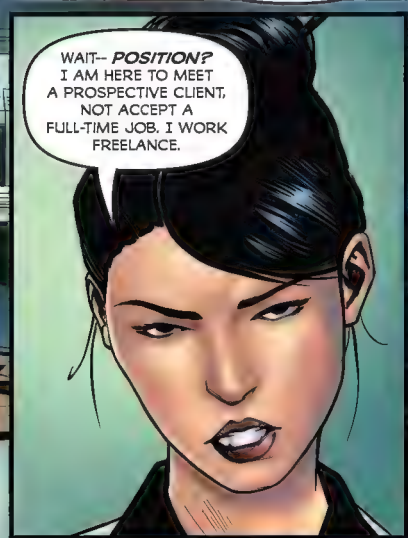
...CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL IN THIS INDUSTRY. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO MISS YOUR WEAPONS, ARE YOU?

IF I NEEDED A WEAPON TO DEFEND MYSELF I WOULD NOT BE MUCH OF AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.

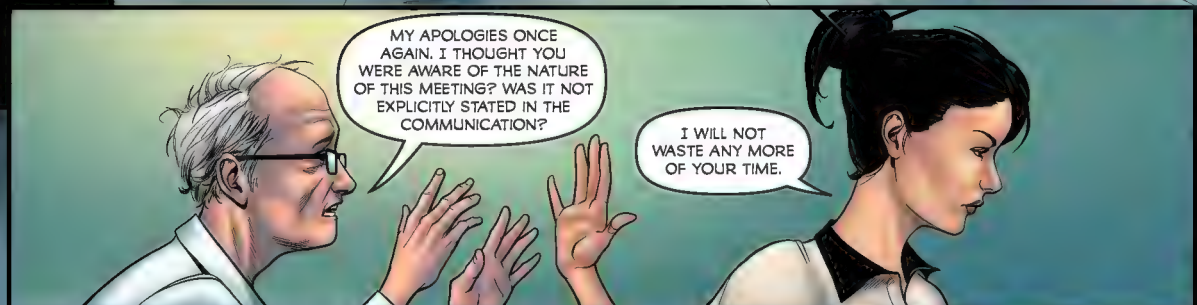


AH, RIGHT-- THAT'S WHAT AGENTS USED TO BE CALLED.

I THINK YOU'LL FIND THE SECURITY GAME HAS CHANGED **A LOT** IN RECENT YEARS. IF YOU ACCEPT THIS POSITION, I'LL--



WAIT-- **POSITION?** I AM HERE TO MEET A PROSPECTIVE CLIENT. NOT ACCEPT A FULL-TIME JOB. I WORK FREELANCE.



MY APOLOGIES ONCE AGAIN. I THOUGHT YOU WERE AWARE OF THE NATURE OF THIS MEETING? WAS IT NOT EXPLICITLY STATED IN THE COMMUNICATION?

I WILL NOT WASTE ANY MORE OF YOUR TIME.



WAIT, **PLEASE**, DON'T LEAVE--

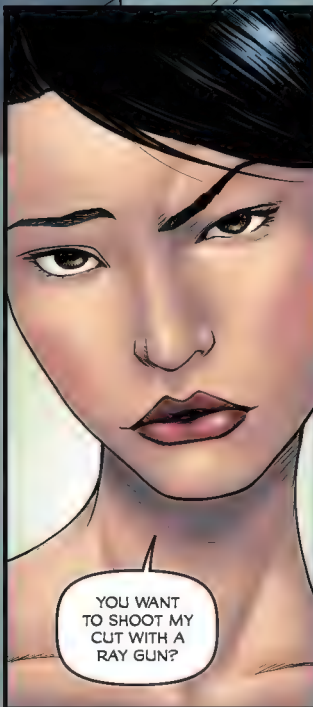
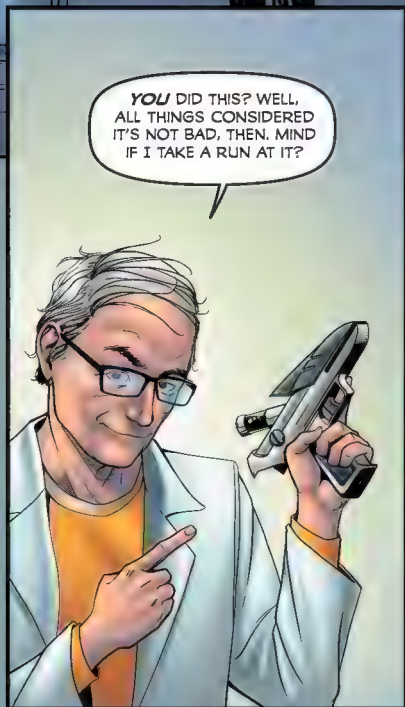
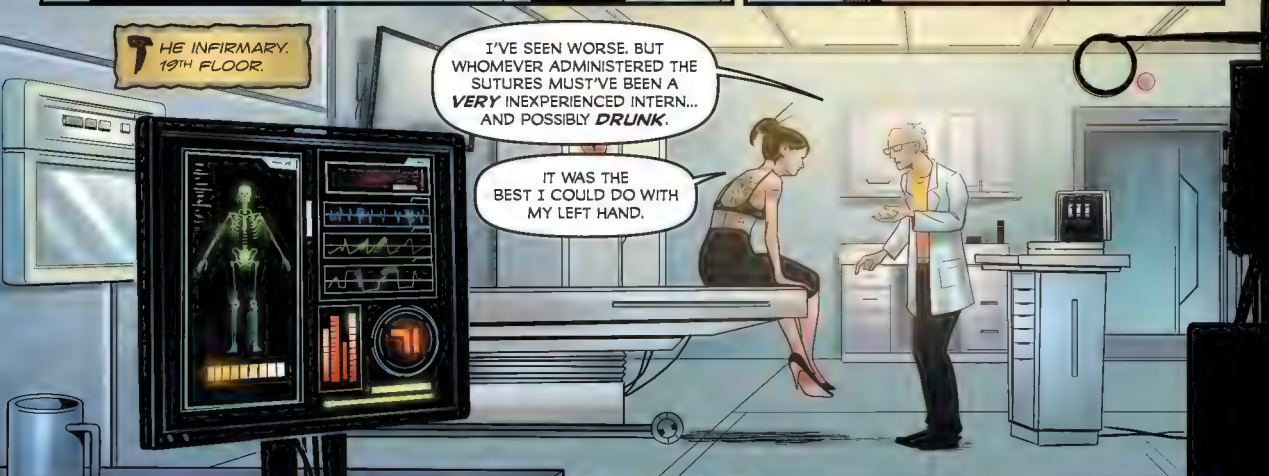
**NGGGH!**



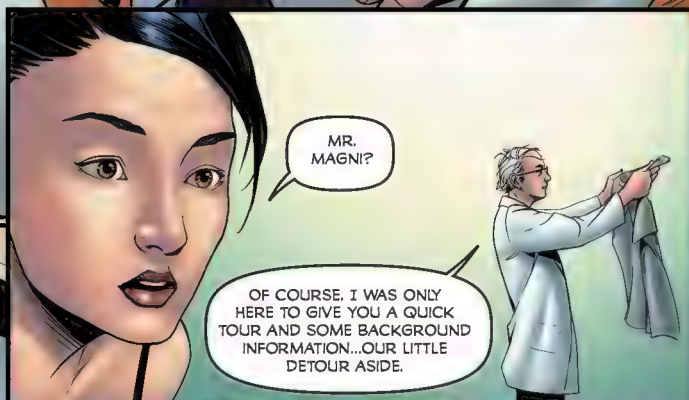
YOUR SHOULDER... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I AM **FINE**.











MR. MAGNI'S OFFICE.  
64TH FLOOR.

AND **THIS**  
MUST BE THE FABLED  
'IRIS' I KEEP HEARING  
ABOUT. I'M ALEXANDER  
MAGNI THE THIRD.  
CALL ME ALEX.

I'VE HEARD  
**AMAZING** THINGS ABOUT YOU,  
DARLING. YOU ONCE TOOK OUT  
A BIKER GANG USING JUST THE  
CHOPSTICKS IN YOUR HAIR.  
IS THAT RIGHT?

DO NOT BELIEVE  
EVERYTHING YOU  
SEE ON **CMZ**.

OH, DON'T  
BE MODEST...  
I WATCH THE NEWS.  
I READ THE TRADES. YOU'RE A  
LEGITIMATE **STAR**.  
I HAVE TO ASK:  
HOW DID YOU  
KNOW THE ATTACK  
WAS COMING IN  
FRANKFURT?

**MISDIRECTION.** THE  
PARROT WAS AN OBVIOUS  
DECOY. IT IS ASSASSINATION  
BASICS 101. YOU GET THE  
TARGET LOOKING  
ONE WAY...

...AND YOU  
COME AT  
THEM FROM  
THE OTHER.

FANTASTIC! SEE?  
**THIS** IS WHAT WE NEED  
HERE AT MAGNI...SOME  
OLD SCHOOL AGENTS WHO  
CAN IMPROVISE, THINK  
ON THEIR FEET.

INDEED. LET  
ME TAKE YOU ON  
A TOUR OF THE  
FACILITIES...

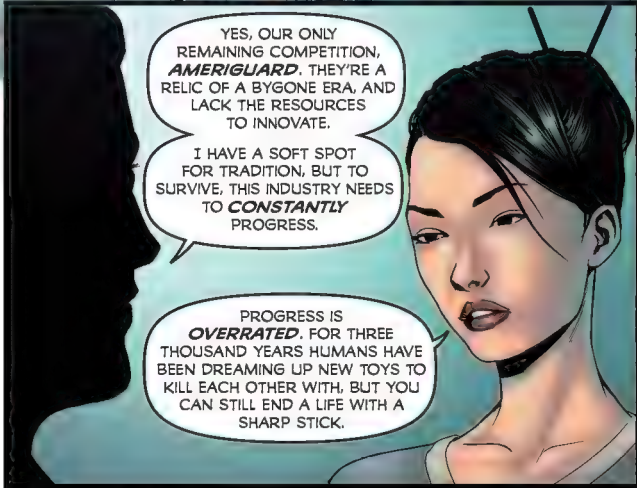




**R** RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT.  
33RD FLOOR.

EVERY SECURITY FIRM IN THE WORLD MUST BE FALLING OVER EACH OTHER TO SIGN YOU TO AN **EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT**.

JUST TWO. I HAVE ALREADY TURNED THE OTHER ONE DOWN.



YES, OUR ONLY REMAINING COMPETITION, **AMERIGUARD**. THEY'RE A RELIC OF A BYGONE ERA, AND LACK THE RESOURCES TO INNOVATE.

I HAVE A SOFT SPOT FOR TRADITION, BUT TO SURVIVE, THIS INDUSTRY NEEDS TO **CONSTANTLY** PROGRESS.

PROGRESS IS **OVERRATED**. FOR THREE THOUSAND YEARS HUMANS HAVE BEEN DREAMING UP NEW TOYS TO KILL EACH OTHER WITH. BUT YOU CAN STILL END A LIFE WITH A SHARP STICK.



BUT EVEN **YOU** HAVE TO AGREE, IT HAS IT'S USES.

BY THE WAY, HOW'S THE SHOULDER?

BETTER.



THIS IS THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, DARLING. INNOVATIONS BREAK BOUNDARIES, THEY SHATTER CEILINGS... CHANGE CAN BE PAINFUL, BUT IT'S INEVITABLE.





MY FATHER STARTED  
MAGNI CORP. HE WOULD  
ALWAYS SAY, 'CHANGE IS  
INEVITABLE. **PROGRESS** ISN'T.'  
THE WORLD IS GOING TO  
CHANGE WHETHER YOU LIKE  
IT OR NOT...IT'S UP TO  
**YOU** TO ADAPT.



WHEN HE DIED, I  
TOOK OVER THE FAMILY  
BUSINESS AT JUST  
TWENTY-TWO. I HAD **NO**  
IDEA WHAT I WAS DOING,  
BUT I HAD A MISSION:  
**EXPANSION.**

MY PLAN WAS TO  
ACQUIRE SMALLER  
COMPANIES AND MERGE  
THEM INTO ONE GLOBAL POWER  
THAT WILL BECOME THE **ONLY**  
NAME IN PERSONAL  
SECURITY.



THAT  
SOUNDS...  
**AMBITIOUS.**

IF YOU'RE NOT  
GROWING, YOU'RE SHRINKING.  
IF YOU'RE NOT CONSTANTLY  
MOVING FORWARD, YOU'RE  
LOSING GROUND.



THE HINROTH. NASTY  
LITTLE CREATURES, AREN'T  
THEY? BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS  
DEVELOPED THOUSANDS OF  
YEARS AGO BY OUR FRIENDS  
UNDER THE SEA.

THANKS TO THIS  
LIQUID DESIGNED BY  
DR. ZYRA, THEY'RE  
RENDERED...WHAT'S  
THE WORD?



IT'S A GEL THAT  
PRESERVES TISSUE IN A  
NON-CRYOGENIC STASIS,  
RENDERING IT UNABLE TO  
REPLICATE CELLS. BUT IT  
KEEPS THE SAMPLES  
**VIALE.**





IF YOU HAD TO PROTECT A CLIENT AGAINST ONE OF THESE-- THE **FULL-SIZED** ONES-- WHAT WOULD YOU DO, IRIS? STAB IT WITH A SWORD?

YOU WOULD BE SURPRISED HOW MANY THINGS I CAN KILL WITH A SWORD.



IT'S NOT JUST **ASSASSINS** YOU'RE UP AGAINST. THIS IS THE NEW WORLD... IT'S A THREE-DIMENSIONAL CHESS GAME, AND THE BOARD IS FILLED WITH GODS AND MONSTERS.

WE HAVE THE MOST ADVANCED TRACKING ON THE PLANET... YOU WOULD ALWAYS HAVE BACK-UP. YOU'D NEVER BE **ALONE** IN THE FIELD.



I HAVE SURVIVED THIS LONG WITHOUT HELP. WHEN AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT IS PROPERLY TRAINED, SHE DOES NOT NEED ANYONE ELSE.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT: DODGING KNIVES AND BULLETS ISN'T A SKILL-- IT'S **LUCK**, DARLING. YOU'RE A SPECTACULAR AGENT, BUT ONE DAY YOU'RE GOING TO ZIG WHEN YOU SHOULD'VE ZAGGED.

LUCK RUNS OUT.



WE HAVE THE ARMOR, THE WEAPONS, AND AS YOU'VE SEEN, THE MEDICAL CARE TO GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY. OUR AGENTS ARE TREATED LIKE ROYALTY.

EVEN BETTER... LIKE **CELEBRITIES**.

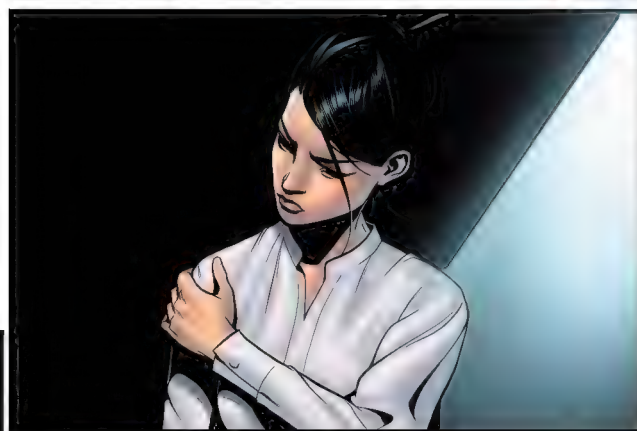




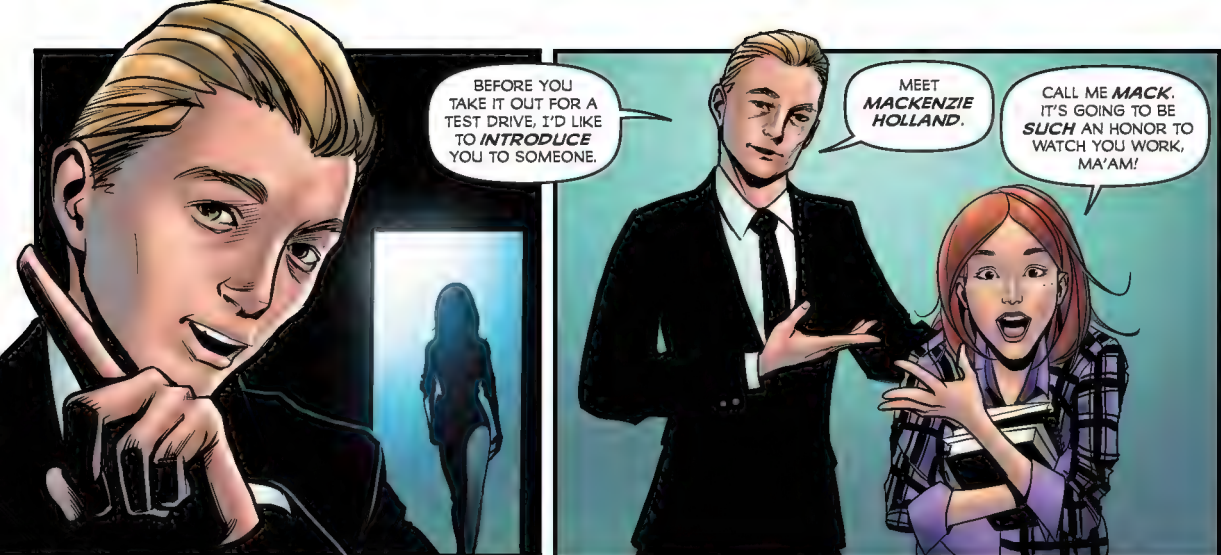
















Blake NORTHCOTT · Donny TRAN  
Omar REMALANTE Jr. · Jaymes REED

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VOL. 5

COVER A

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OF 5

# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT iris



Donny arciniega

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VOL. 5

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BY DONNY TRAN  
& ERICK ARCINIEGA



DIRECT EDITION  
BY KERI CHI  
& OMI REMALANTE JR.

## "Chaos by Design"

BLAKE NORTHCOTT

*story*

DONNY TRAN

& ANDRE RISSO (PG 2-6)

*panels of digital ink*

OMI REMALANTE JR.

*colors*

## CHAPTER TWO

*The story so far*

During an attempted kidnapping of recording artist Trent Hauntwell, at the Frankfurt Airport, Executive Assistant Iris revealed her true occupation as his undercover bodyguard while saving his life in the process. Following the rescue, her reputation was plastered all over the news and drew the attention of Magni Global, the worldwide leader in security. After an exuberant pitch from Alexander Magni, the head of the company, Iris tentatively agreed to join their ranks, unsure of what her future holds at the massive conglomerate.

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C

ONTROL IS HARD  
TO QUANTIFY.

WE CANNOT SEE IT,  
OR TOUCH IT, OR TASTE  
IT. ASK A HUNDRED  
PEOPLE TO DEFINE THE  
WORD, AND YOU WILL  
RECEIVE A HUNDRED  
DIFFERENT ANSWERS.

BUT WE ALL WANT IT.

WE WANT TO KNOW THAT  
WE ARE THE ONES STEERING THE  
SHIP, NAVIGATING THE WATERS OF  
OUR OWN DESTINIES. CONTROL IS A  
CURRENCY THAT CANNOT BE MEASURED,  
BUT ATTAINING IT MEANS **POWER**...  
OVER OURSELVES, OVER OTHERS...  
SOME ARE DRIVEN TO MADNESS  
IN PURSUIT OF IT.

AND SOME  
ARE WILLING TO  
DIE FOR IT.

Ben  
Schoenberg



90 MINUTES  
EARLIER.

35,000  
FEET ABOVE  
CALIFORNIA.

WHETHER WE WERE FIGHTING  
WITH OUR WORDS OR OUR  
WEAPONS, HUMAN BEINGS  
ARE **ALWAYS** LOOKING FOR  
THAT EPHEMERAL MOMENT

THAT SPARK OF EXCITEMENT WHEN  
WE FEEL, JUST FOR A **SECOND**,  
LIKE THINGS ARE GOING OUR WAY.



I'M SORRY, BUT **FACTS** DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR **FEELINGS**. WHEN WE DISCREDIT OUR POLITICAL OPPONENTS BY USING MORAL ARGUMENTS, ALL LOGIC CEASES TO BE--

JEEZ, THIS **BEN SCHOENBERG** DUDE SURE LIKES TO HEAR HIMSELF TALK.

WELL HE **IS** ON A 'FREEDOM OF SPEECH' TOUR. IF HE DID NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY HE WOULD NOT SELL MANY BOOKS. I HAVE SEEN A FEW OF HIS YOUTOOB VIDEOS IN PREPARATION FOR OUR ASSIGNMENT.

WHATEVS, AS LONG AS MAGNI'S CHECKS KEEP CLEARING, I'M CHILL WITH PROTECTING ALMOST ANYONE.

HAS HEADQUARTERS INDICATED HOW MUCH **PROTECTION** HE IS GOING TO REQUIRE?

A **LOT**, FROM THE LOOKS OF IT. THREE HUNDRED ON THE GROUND, AND THEY LOOK MIFFED. THEY'RE ALSO STIRRING THE POT ON CHIRPER, SO THERE COULD BE A **THOUSAND** BY THE TIME WE ARRIVE.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT?

THEY'RE ON A **STAND-DOWN ORDER**. THEY'LL BE HOLDING A FEW BLOCKS AWAY. UNLESS THE SYRUP **REALLY** HITS THE CEILING FAN, THEY WON'T MOVE IN.

SO IT IS YOU AND I AGAINST A MOB? I AM NOT ENCOURAGED BY THESE ODDS.





DON'T SWEAT IT. OUR JOB IS JUST TO **OBSERVE**. THAT'S THE 'A' DIRECTIVE, ANYWAY... WE HAVE A 'B' DIRECTIVE TO OPEN WHEN WE'RE IN POSITION.

THIS FEELS MORE LIKE **THEATRE** THAN A MISSION.

JUST THE WAY THAT MAGNI WORKS. THEY LIKE TO HAND OUT INFORMATION ONE PIECE AT A TIME. IT *IS* KINDA EXCITING, THOUGH.



I STILL HAVE MY RESERVATIONS ABOUT **ALEXANDER MAGNI** AND HIS METHODS, THOUGH I *AM* IMPRESSED BY THEIR TAILOR. THESE ARE SO LIGHTWEIGHT... I CANNOT BELIEVE THEY ARE **BULLETPROOF**.

YEAH, THEIR GEAR IS PRETTY DOPE. THANKFULLY I DON'T **NEED** PROTECTION, BUT I CAN DEFINITELY SEE THE APPEAL.



YOU...DO NOT **NEED** THE PROTECTION? ALRIGHT.



WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?

JUST RANDOM NOTES...I'M SHADOWING YOU TO BECOME A FIELD AGENT, BUT I'M STILL A **TECHNICIAN**...I HAVE TO WRITE DETAILED PROFILES ON EVERYONE. RIGHT NOW I'M RESEARCHING YOUR PAST MISSIONS.



SPEAKING OF **MOBS**, IT SEEMS LIKE YOU HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE IN THAT AREA...WANT TO HEAR A STORY I HEARD ABOUT YOUR TIME IN JAPAN? MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME FILL IN SOME PLOT HOLES?

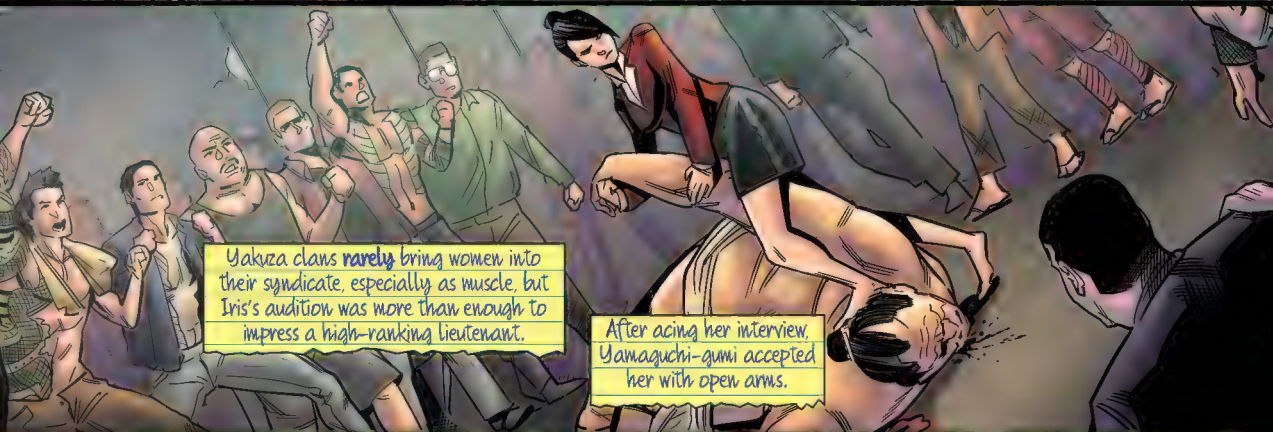
I WILL DO MY BEST.





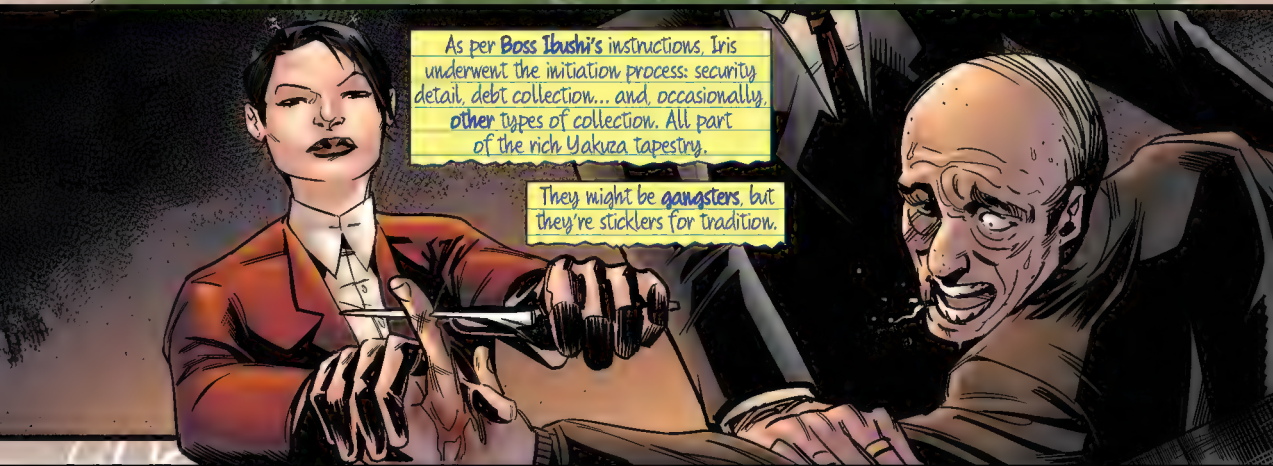
While under the employ of Francis Wai-Hong Ching, Iris was tasked with an undercover assignment: infiltrate Japan's deadliest Yakuza gang, Yamaguchi-gumi.

Ching was keen on thinning out their ranks, making room for Chingcorp to expand into the Tokyo real estate market unchallenged... and without having to pay unnecessary 'protection fees'.



Yakuza clans rarely bring women into their syndicate, especially as muscle, but Iris's audition was more than enough to impress a high-ranking lieutenant.

After acing her interview, Yamaguchi-gumi accepted her with open arms.



As per Boss Ibushi's instructions, Iris underwent the initiation process: security detail, debt collection... and, occasionally, other types of collection. All part of the rich Yakuza taping.

They might be gangsters, but they're sticklers for tradition.



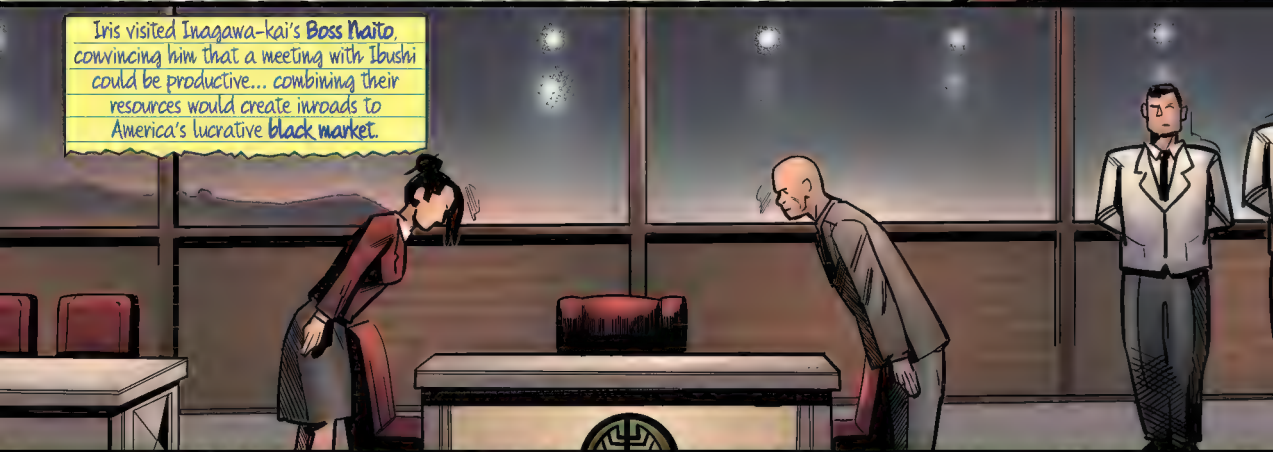
And like all clans, Yamaguchi-gumi has a rigid hierarchy. Going from the rank of 'little brother' to 'lieutenant' often takes years, but Iris expedited the process.

Her efficiency at debt collection impressed Ibushi... she was instantly promoted.

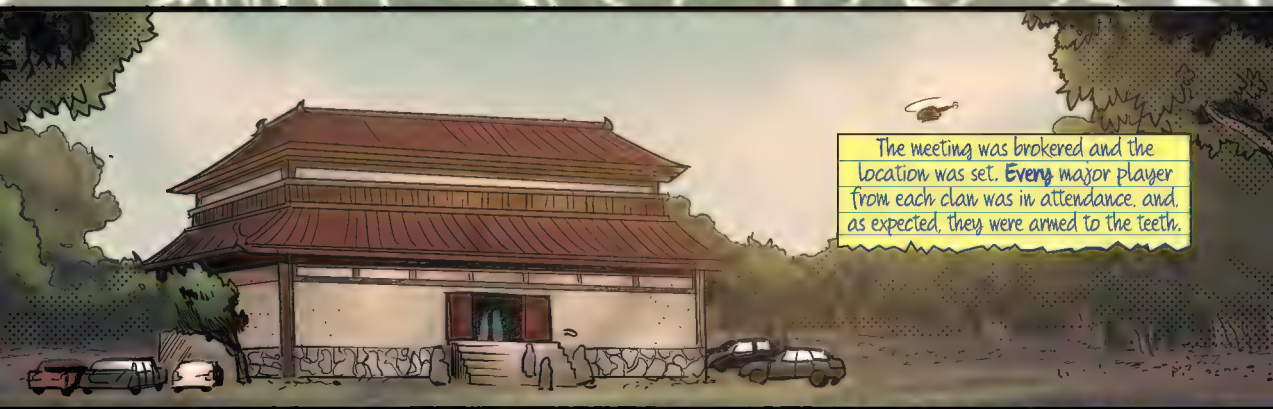




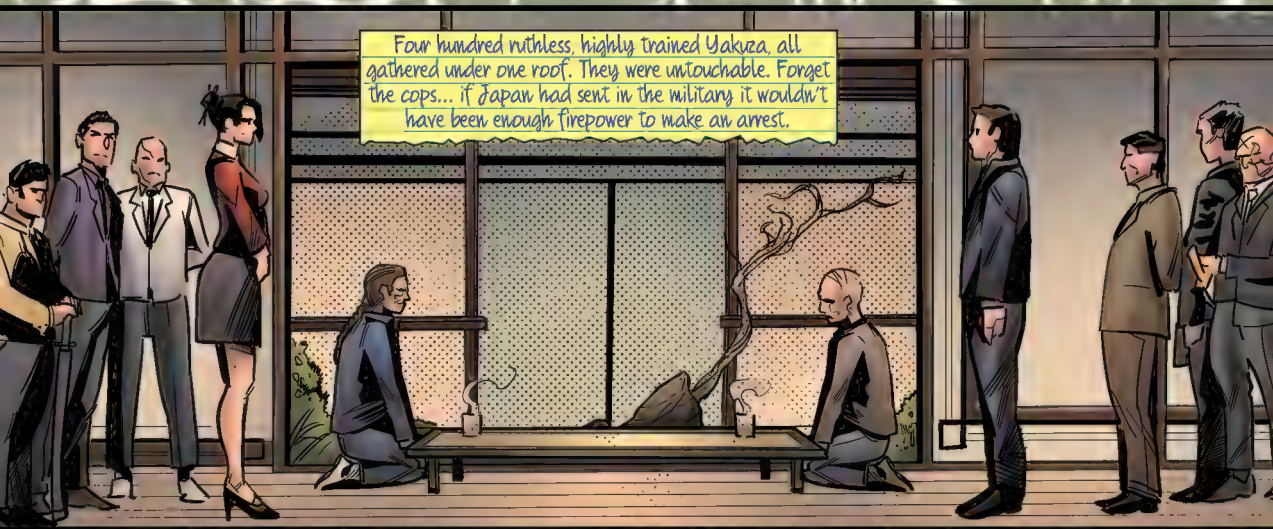
Before long, she'd become Ibushi's trusted advisor. So much so that he listened when she advised that the only way to grow was through a merger. A truce with Tokyo's Inagawa-kai clan would lead to international expansion.



Iris visited Inagawa-kai's Boss Maito, convincing him that a meeting with Ibushi could be productive... combining their resources would create inroads to America's lucrative black market.



The meeting was brokered and the location was set. **Every** major player from each clan was in attendance, and, as expected, they were armed to the teeth.



Four hundred ruthless, highly trained Yakuza, all gathered under one roof. They were untouchable. Forget the cops... if Japan had sent in the military it wouldn't have been enough firepower to make an arrest.





Once everyone was settled, Iris sprung her trap.

The following day, descriptors used by the press ranged from 'bloodbath' to 'warzone', but words alone weren't enough to contextualize the carnage... to paint a grim enough picture of what had taken place.



The police recovered more than twenty thousand shell casings from the crime scene. The temple was so structurally damaged it had to be condemned.



There were almost no survivors. A few dozen Yakuza with a pulse were rushed to a nearby hospital, but in the end, none of them pulled through... with the exception of Boss Ibushi.



Ibushi was questioned by journalists, guards, the warden... but to this day, he refuses to say how both clans were wiped out by a single woman within a matter of minutes.

How did you pull it off, by the way? Are you as good with a sword as everyone says?





THE PODIUM IS **TOO FAR** AWAY. IF THE PRINCIPAL NEEDS EXTRACTION, I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO REACH HIM IN TIME.

THIS WAS THE **A DIRECTIVE**: THIS ROOFTOP, OBSERVATION ONLY. WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BUDGE UNLESS WE GET A CALL FROM HQ.



THIS IS GOING TO SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL, MACK. THERE ARE **HUNDREDS** OF HOSTILES, AND THEY JUST SEEM TO BE GETTING ANGRIER.

WHY DO AGENCIES USE WORDS LIKE '**PRINCIPAL**' AND '**HOSTILES**' TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE? IF WE'RE TRYING TO PROTECT SOMEONE, WHY NOT JUST USE THEIR REAL NAME?

DEATH TO FASCIST!



LABELS **DEHUMANIZE**. IT STINGS A LOT LESS TO LOSE A **PRINCIPAL** THAN TO LOSE BEN, DEVOTED HUSBAND AND FATHER OF TWO.

AND CALLING YOUR ENEMIES 'HOSTILES' MAKES THEM EASIER TO HURT...IF THE SITUATION CALLS FOR IT.

DARN, THAT IS **DEEP**.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO WRITE THAT DOWN.



I WAS TOLD TO OPEN THE **B DIRECTIVE** ONCE WE'D ARRIVED AT OUR POSITION. LET'S TAKE A LOOK-SEE...THIS IS EXCITING-- I FEEL LIKE I'M WINNING A PRIZE.







SICK! IT COMES WITH A BULLET.

UNLESS THERE ARE A FEW HUNDRED **MORE** WHERE THAT CAME FROM, WE SHOULD CALL HEADQUARTERS AND ASK FOR **ANOTHER** PACKAGE.



NO, IT'S NOT FOR THE PROTESTORS. IT'S FOR A **POLICE CAR**. THAT ONE, RIGHT THERE.



THIS IS DIRECTIVE B: IT'S AN **EXPLOSIVE** ROUND. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO SHOOT IT AT THE CAR IF THE CROWD STARTS GOING HAYWIRE.

DIRECTIVE B

THAT DOES NOT MAKE ANY **SENSE**. HOW DOES MAGNI KNOW THAT WILL NOT INFLAME THE MOB EVEN FURTHER? THE OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO PROTECT THE PRINCIPAL...VIOLENCE SHOULD ALWAYS BE THE FINAL OPTION.



AN EXPLOSION WILL BE ENOUGH TO END THE STAND-DOWN ORDER AND BRING IN THE LOCAL PD. THEN **THEY** CAN EXTRACT THE PRINCIPAL, AND EVERYONE GOES HOME HAPPY.

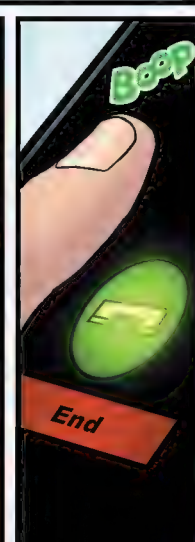
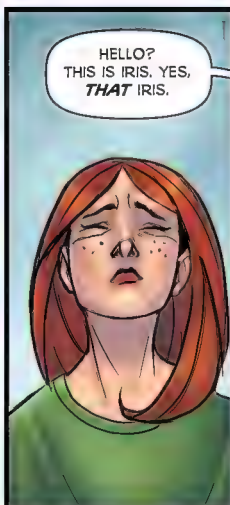
IT COULD TAKE THEM TEN MINUTES TO GET HERE AND DISPERSE THE CROWD...MAYBE LONGER. IF A RIOT BREAKS OUT, **BEN** COULD BE **DEAD** IN TWO.



THIS IS **HIGHLY** IRREGULAR. I AM CALLING HEADQUARTERS FOR CLARIFICATION.

WE'RE **NOT** SUPPOSED TO CALL HQ, IRIS...AND WAIT, I THOUGHT WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO CALL THE PRINCIPAL 'BEN'?

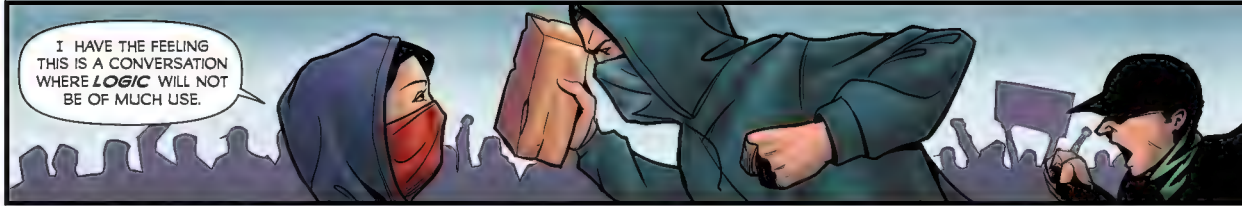
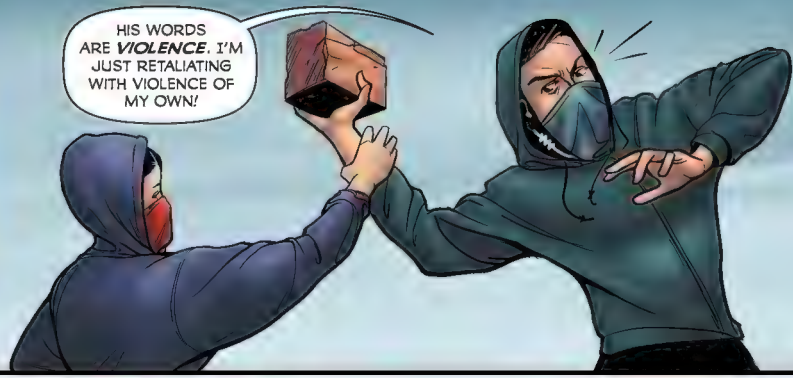








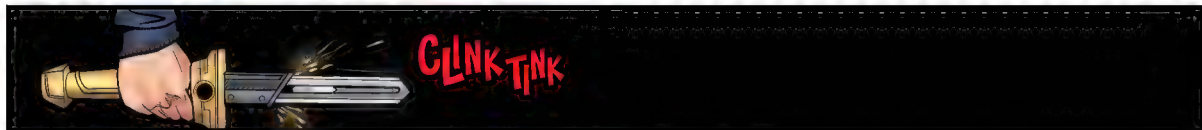












NICE PARTY TRICK.  
BUT NEXT TIME, DON'T  
BRING A SWORD TO  
A GUNFIGHT.

IN A MOB, IT ONLY TAKES ONE  
OR TWO INSTIGATORS TO START  
THE MADNESS...TO SPARK THE  
TRAIL OF GUNPOWDER



GHAAAAAH?

BLAM

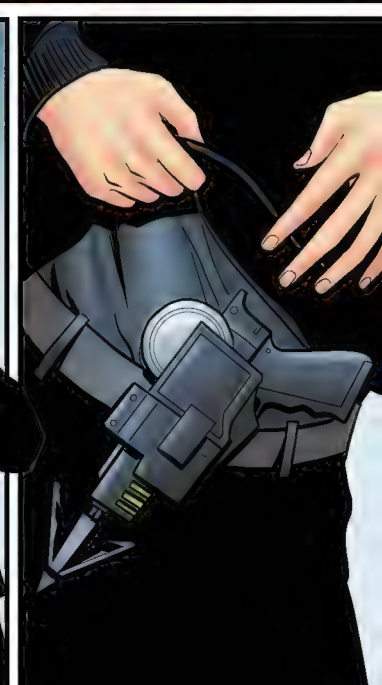
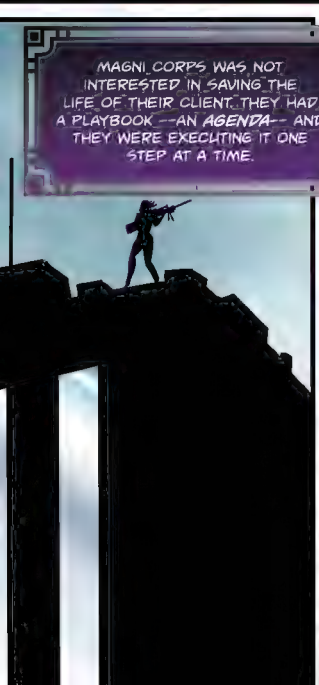


AHHAH!

A THREAT IS MADE.  
A WEAPON IS DRAWN.  
A SHOT IS FIRED, AND  
IN A SPLIT SECOND, THE  
FLAME BURSTS TO LIFE,  
AND RUSHES MADLY  
TOWARDS THE POWDER  
KEG. IT IS IRREVERSIBLE,  
PICKING UP SPEED.

AND BEFORE  
YOU KNOW IT...













MAGNI GLOBAL  
HEAD OFFICE,  
LOS ANGELES.







RESPECTFULLY, I AM DECLINING YOUR INVITATION, ALEX. WE ARE GOING TO TALK THIS OUT **RIGHT NOW**.

FAIR ENOUGH, BUT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DOCK YOUR PAY FOR THAT DOOR.



WHO HIRED US? BECAUSE IT WAS NOT BEN SCHOENBERG.

YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES: **CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY**. OUR CLIENTS SEND US THE DIRECTIVES, AND WE ASSIGN THE AGENTS TO CARRY THEM OUT.

AND THEY PAY A HANDSOME PRICE FOR THEIR PRIVACY.

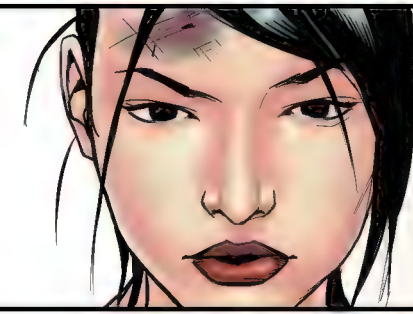


NOT ALL OF THOSE RIOTERS WERE THERE TO FIGHT...THEY WERE ANGRY, BUT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE GOTTEN VIOLENT.

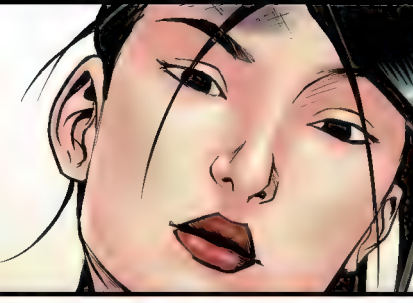
I NOTICED ONE OF THE INSTIGATORS HAD AN **EARRPIECE**. IT CAME LOOSE WHEN I DISLOCATED HIS JAW.



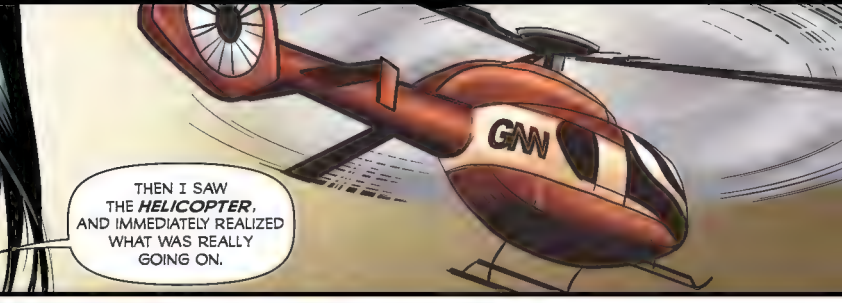
HMMM... CURIOUS.



AND A SECOND PROTESTER WAS WEARING A VEST. NOT A CHEAP ONE. EITHER. STANDARD ISSUE SWAT TEAM BOOTS AS WELL, FROM WHAT I COULD TELL.



THEN I SAW THE **HELICOPTER**. AND IMMEDIATELY REALIZED WHAT WAS REALLY GOING ON.



IT'S NOT THE **EIGHTIES** ANYMORE, DEAR. THE NEWS ISN'T ONE HOUR YOU CONSUME OVER DINNER AND DRINKS. IT'S A TWENTY-FOUR-SEVEN **REALITY SHOW**, AND YOU HAVE TO KEEP THE VIEWERS ENTERTAINED.

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN ISOLATED FOR MUCH OF YOUR LIFE, BUT THAT'S JUST THE WAY OF THE WORLD NOW.

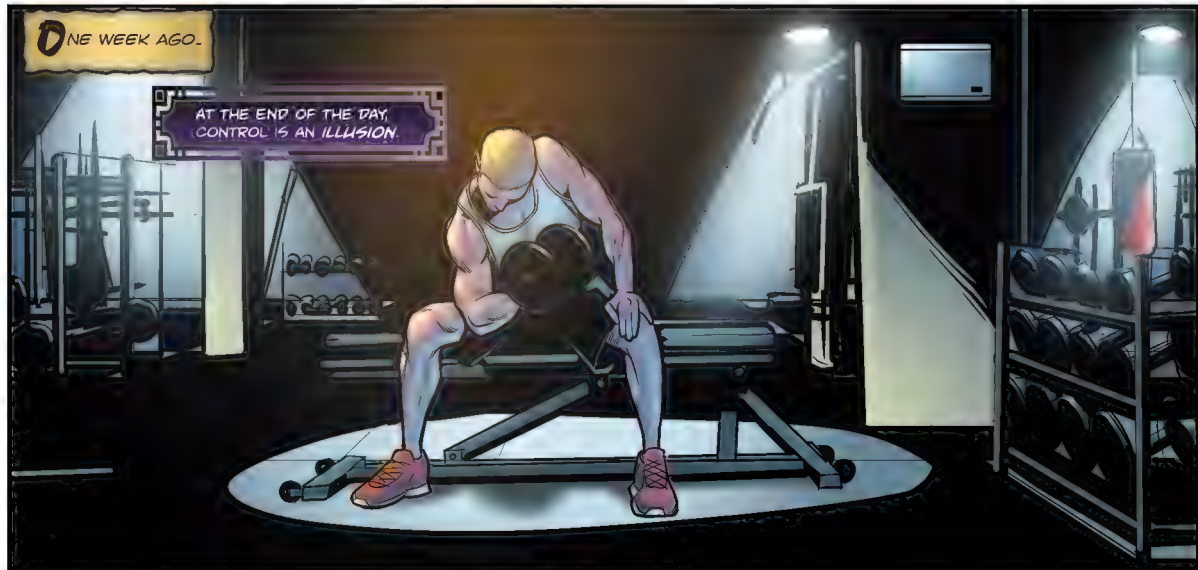






ONE WEEK AGO.

AT THE END OF THE DAY,  
CONTROL IS AN ILLUSION.



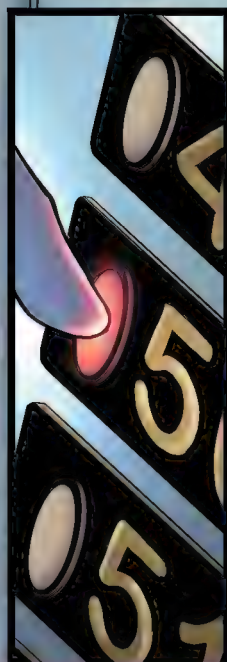
JAKE LAZARUS, YOUR  
PRESENCE IS REQUESTED ON THE  
50TH FLOOR. PLEASE REPORT TO  
**HUMAN RESOURCES.**



IT OFFERS A DOSE OF WARM,  
COMFORTING RELIEF, A FLEETING  
MOMENT OF SOLACE IN A WORLD  
THAT IS PERPETUALLY - AND  
**INCREASINGLY** - CAREENING  
OUT OF CONTROL.



WHAT GIVES US THE ILLUSION OF  
CONTROL? IT IS NOT ALWAYS AN  
EPIC STRUGGLE, INTERNAL OR  
EXTERNAL. MOST OF THE TIME,  
IT IS SIMPLY **ROUTINE**.



IT IS THE UNREMARKABLE, THE MUNDANE.  
THE BELIEF THAT KEEPING OUR HEADS DOWN  
AND GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS WILL KEEP  
THE CHAOS AT BAY... AT LEAST FOR A WHILE.





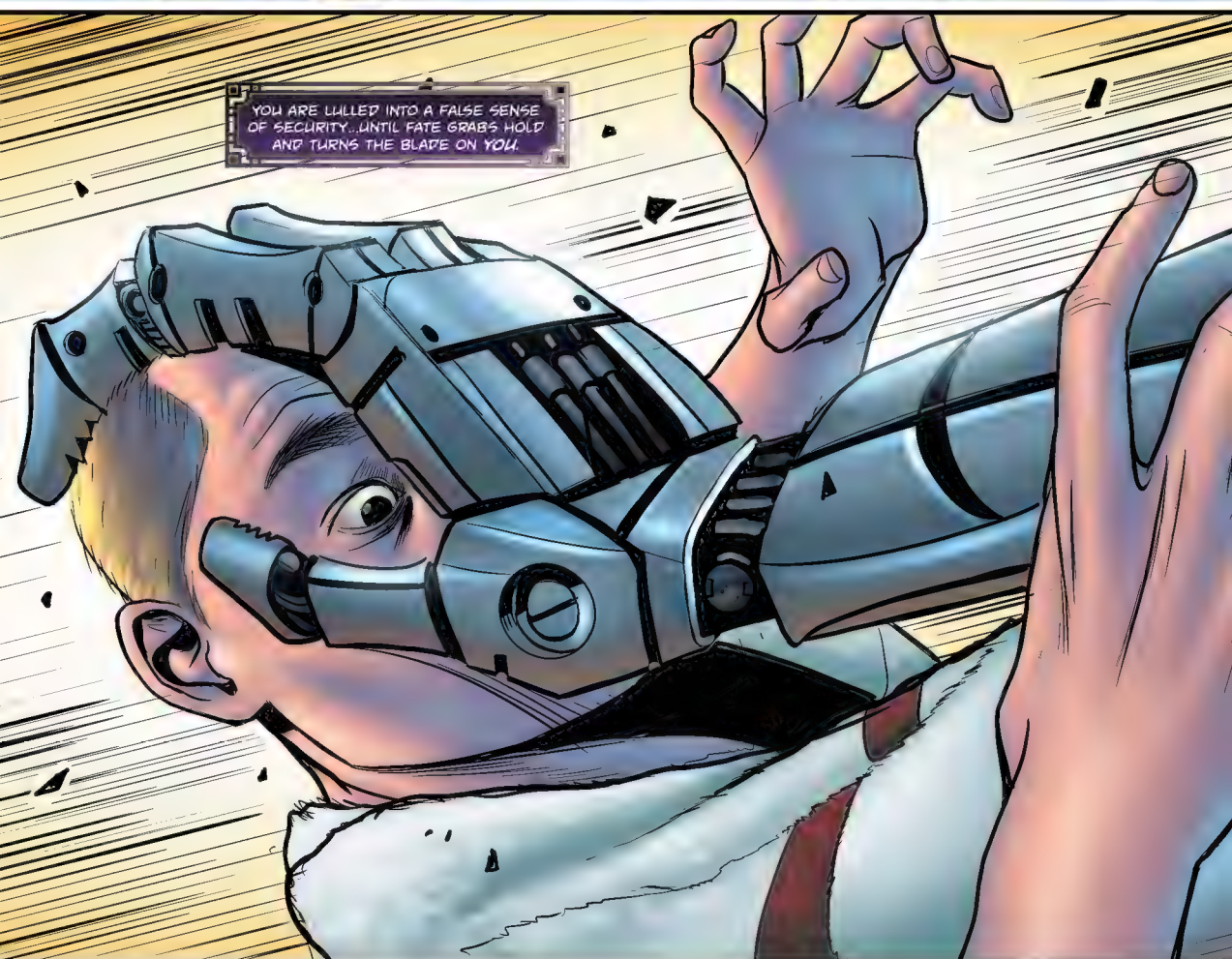
BUT THE SCARIEST PART ABOUT CONTROL IS THAT, WHILE YOU CANNOT SEE IT, OR TOUCH IT, OR TASTE IT, YOU CAN DEFINITELY FEEL IT, RIGHT DOWN TO YOUR BONES.

IT IS LIKE WIELDING A SWORD FORGED FROM PURE HUBRIS. YOU GET A SOLID GRIP ON THE HILT, AND IN THAT MOMENT, NO ONE CAN WRENCH IT FROM YOUR HANDS.



AND WHILE YOU ARE BASKING IN THE RELIEF OF YOUR TEMPORARY CONTROL, YOU LOWER YOUR SHIELDS.

YOU ARE LULLED INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY...UNTIL FATE GRABS HOLD AND TURNS THE BLADE ON YOU.



AND LIKE A MIRAGE IN THE DESERT, ALL YOUR PRECIOUS CONTROL DISAPPEARS.

**To Be Continued!**





Blake NORTHCOTT · Donny TRAN  
OHLI REMALANTE Jr. · Jaymie REED

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OF 5

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## CHAPTER THREE

*The story so far*

Following a botched protection operation on the college campus in Berkeley, California, Iris shockingly learned that Magni's interests were not aligned with her own when it came to field work. A deadly state of reality that Iris refused to accept. However, her later confrontation with Alexander Magni did little to ease her concerns, as Magni's subtle threats of control seemed all too familiar to the Executive Assistant. Meanwhile, a fellow agent of Magni was sent to H.R. and made a sinister—and bloody—discovery about the department's true purpose.

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ROME, ITALY.

As it turns out, it's really hard  
to assassinate an assassin.

They specialize in ending lives, so it's  
unlikely you're gonna catch them in a  
scenario they haven't thought of first. To  
kill someone who is ostensibly un-killable,  
you first need the element of surprise.

And then you need someone  
who is even better at killing  
than they are.



BENVENUTI  
AL CAFFÈ GIOVANNI,  
BELLISSIMO. A  
WONDERFUL DAY IN  
ROMA, NO?

I TRUST  
SOMETHING ON  
THE MENU WILL BE  
TO YOUR LIKING?



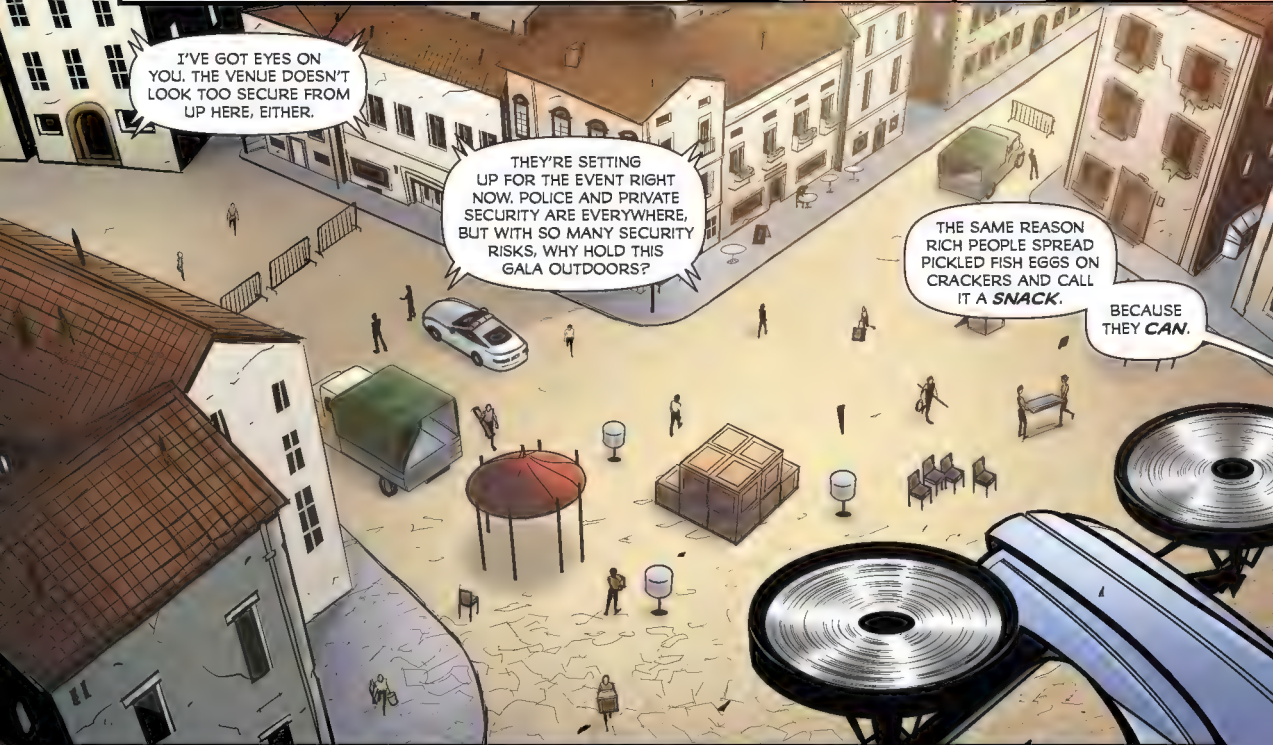
GRAZIE  
MILLE.







MACK, I AM IN THE SQUARE, ACROSS FROM THE VENUE. THIS IS A **KILL BOX**. THE COSA NOSTRA COULD HIDE A MOBSTER IN A HUNDRED DIFFERENT SPOTS, UNDETECTED, AND SHOOT ANYONE THEY LIKE.



I'VE GOT EYES ON YOU. THE VENUE DOESN'T LOOK TOO SECURE FROM UP HERE, EITHER.

THEY'RE SETTING UP FOR THE EVENT RIGHT NOW. POLICE AND PRIVATE SECURITY ARE EVERYWHERE, BUT WITH SO MANY SECURITY RISKS, WHY HOLD THIS GALA OUTDOORS?

THE SAME REASON RICH PEOPLE SPREAD PICKLED FISH EGGS ON CRACKERS AND CALL IT A **SNACK**.

BECAUSE THEY **CAN**.

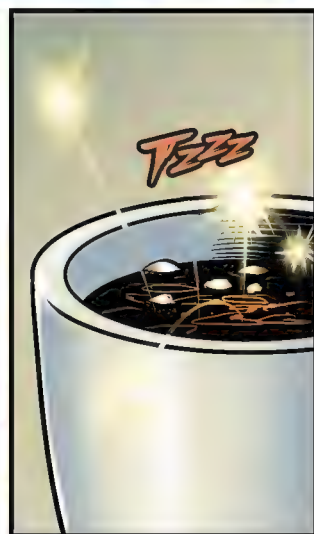
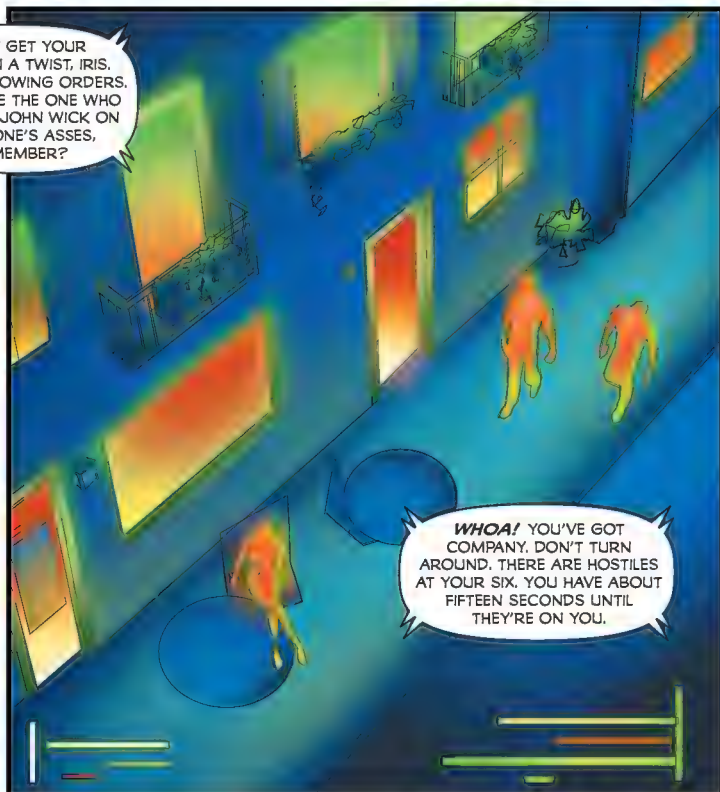
REMEMBER THAT OUR JOB ISN'T TO ASK QUESTIONS...WE'RE IN COSA NOSTRA'S BACKYARD, AND THE JAPANESE REFUSED TO PAY THEIR PROTECTION FEE FOR THIS EVENT...

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MAFIA HAVE IN MIND FOR PRESIDENT OKADA **OR** HIS DAUGHTER.

I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN. IT IS THE FIRST WORTHWHILE ASSIGNMENT THAT MAGNI HAS GIVEN US.















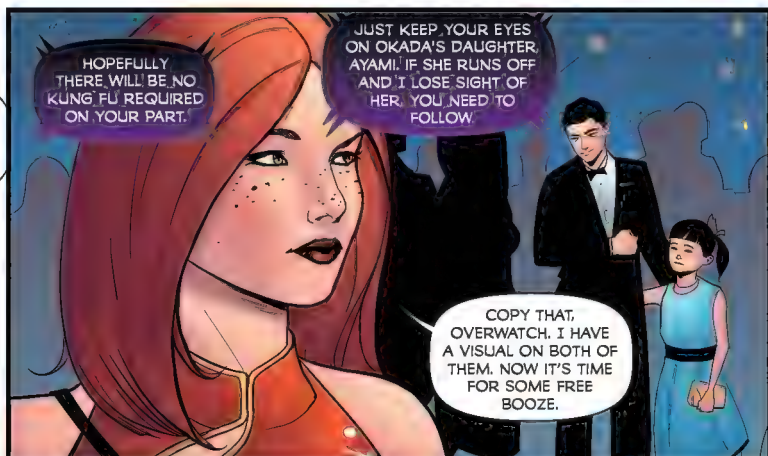
LATER.

QUICK QUESTION:  
HOW THE HECK DO YOU  
WALK ON COBBLESTONE  
STREETS IN FREAKING HIGH  
HEELS? AND HOW DO  
YOU *BREATHE* IN  
THIS THING?!

IF I HAVE TO  
BUST OUT SOME KUNG  
FU MOVES ON ONE OF THESE  
FOOLS, THIS OUTFIT IS GONNA  
SEVERELY LIMIT MY RANGE  
OF MOTION.



THIS IS  
*OVERWATCH*.  
I AM IN THE NEST,  
AND I HAVE ESTABLISHED  
A VISUAL... I CAN SEE  
THE ACCESS CARD  
WORKED.



HOPEFULLY  
THERE WILL BE NO  
KUNG FU REQUIRED  
ON YOUR PART.

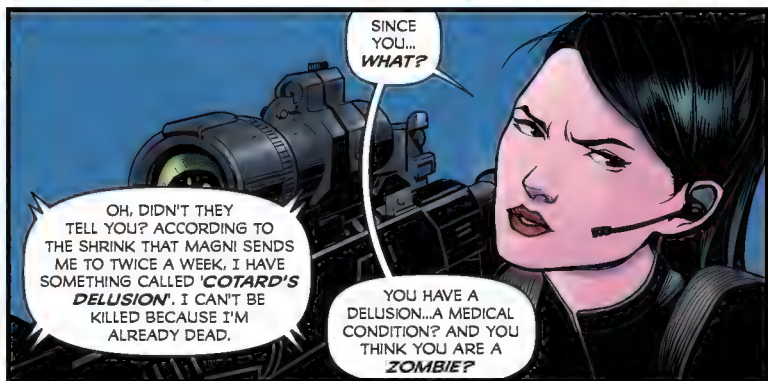
JUST KEEP YOUR EYES  
ON OKADA'S DAUGHTER,  
AYAMI. IF SHE RUNS OFF  
AND I LOSE SIGHT OF  
HER, YOU NEED TO  
FOLLOW.

COPY THAT,  
OVERWATCH. I HAVE  
A VISUAL ON BOTH OF  
THEM. NOW IT'S TIME  
FOR SOME FREE  
BOOZE.



I INFORMED MAGNI  
CORPUS OF THE TACTICAL  
CHANGE. THEY WERE  
SURPRISINGLY AMENABLE  
TO MY DECISION.

SINCE I CAN'T BE  
KILLED IT'S PROBABLY  
BETTER THAT I'M ON  
THE *GROUND* FOR  
THIS ONE, ANYWAY.



SINCE  
YOU...  
*WHAT?*

OH, DIDN'T THEY  
TELL YOU? ACCORDING TO  
THE SHRINK THAT MAGNI SENDS  
ME TO TWICE A WEEK, I HAVE  
SOMETHING CALLED '*COTARD'S  
DELUSION*'. I CAN'T BE  
KILLED BECAUSE I'M  
ALREADY DEAD.

YOU HAVE A  
DELUSION...A MEDICAL  
CONDITION? AND YOU  
THINK YOU ARE A  
*ZOMBIE?*





WELL, THEY *SAY* IT'S A DELUSION, BUT I KNOW IT'S REAL. AND I'M NOT A ZOMBIE...IT'S MORE LIKE I'M A GHOST IN HUMAN FORM. I'VE BEEN KILLED A BUNCH OF TIMES, AND I WAKE UP IN THE SAME BODY.

THAT IS...VERY INTERESTING.



HEAD'S UP, OVERWATCH. I'VE GOT MOVEMENT DOWN HERE. THIS MIGHT BE OUR GUY.



HOLD YOUR POSITION, UNLESS HE MAKES AN AGGRESSIVE MOVE, DO NOT INTERVENE. FOR ALL WE KNOW HE IS JUST ADDITIONAL SECURITY FOR THE PRESIDENT.

I'VE GOT A KNIFE WITH ME...IF I GET CLOSE ENOUGH, I CAN STAB HIM.



YOU BROUGHT A KNIFE WITH YOU?

WELL, I WASN'T GONNA RISK BRINGING A GUN TO THIS PARTY. WHAT IF THEY SEARCHED MY PURSE?

IF THIS MAN IS A THREAT, I WILL BE THE ONE TO HANDLE HIM. DO NOT ENGAGE FOR ANY REASON. DO YOU HEAR ME?



I'M NOT *THAT* CRAZY, IRIS...I'M NOT JUST GONNA CUT HIM FOR NO REASON. JUST WANNA MOVE IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK.

GET YOUR HAND OUT OF YOUR PURSE, MACK. I WILL BE RIGHT DOWN, SO... *WAIT*, I SEE SOMETHING. A POSSIBLE SHOOTER ON THE SOUTH ROOF.

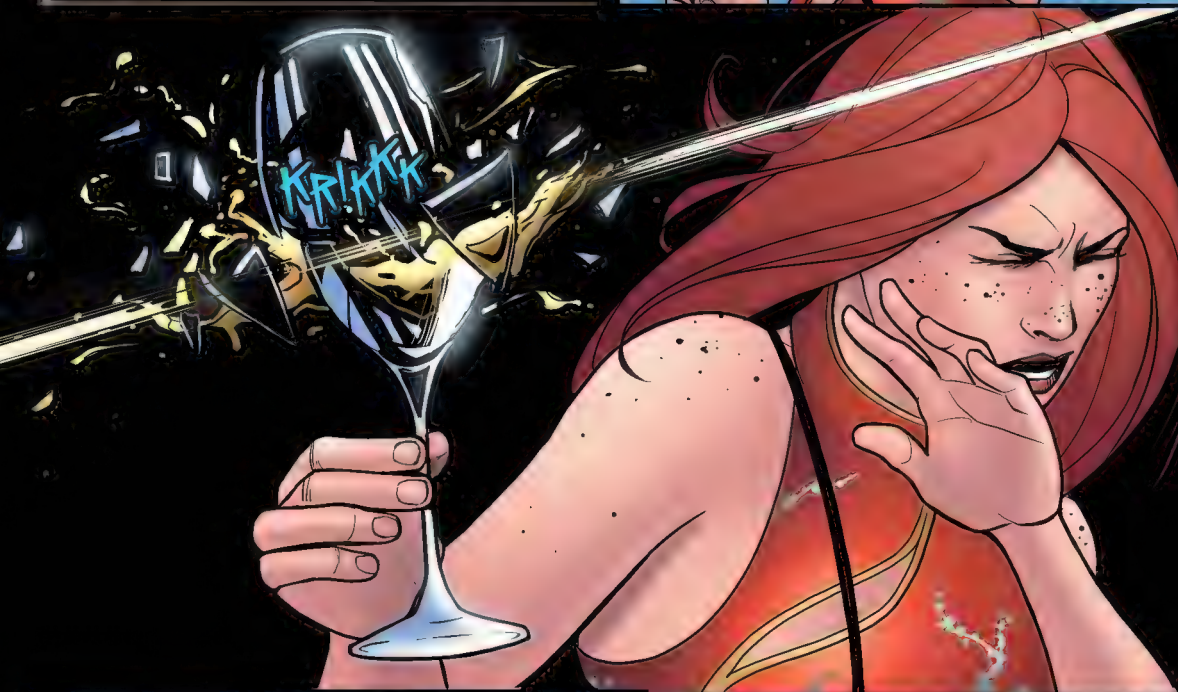




I AM  
IN *PURSUIT!*  
FIND COVER!



I *SEE* HIM!  
YOU'D BETTER  
GET TO HIM QUICK,  
BECAUSE I THINK HE'S  
GONNA TAKE A  
SHOT AT--



IS AYAMI ALL  
RIGHT? WHAT  
ABOUT THE  
PRESIDENT?

THAT SHOT WAS  
CLOSE, BUT THE KID IS  
FINE. SO IS OKADA. SECURITY  
IS GOING BONKERS DOWN  
HERE...WHATEVER YOU PLAN  
ON DOING, DO IT *FAST*.



HE IS  
GETTING  
AWAY!

I'M HEADING OUT  
TO THE CAR. I'LL SWING  
AROUND AND PICK YOU UP  
BY THE SOUTH BUILDING  
IN THREE MINUTES.  
*BE READY!*







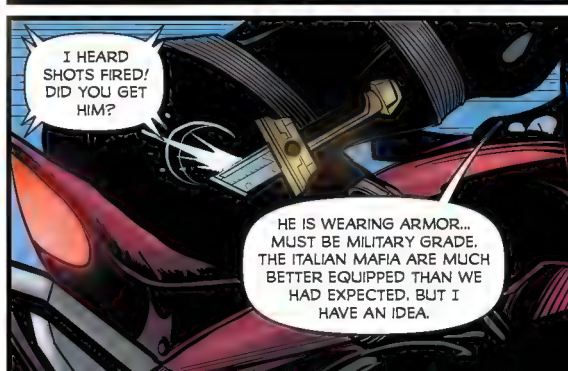
YOUR **WATCH** IS OUTFITTED WITH AN IGNITION APP...JUST STAND NEXT TO THE VEHICLE YOU WANT AND IT'S YOURS. TWO CLICKS TO THE RIGHT, THREE TO THE LEFT.



REMEMBER THE MISSION PARAMETERS, IRIS...ANYONE WHO TAKES A SHOT AT OKADA, OR HIS DAUGHTER, IS FAIR GAME. HE TRIED TO KILL AYAMI, SO YOU HAVE A GREEN LIGHT TO USE LETHAL FORCE.



A CHILD DRAGGED INTO A LIFE OF VIOLENCE. SHE IS BARELY EIGHT, AND SHE HAS, **ALREADY**, HAD HER FIRST NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE.



HE IS WEARING ARMOR... MUST BE MILITARY GRADE. THE ITALIAN MAFIA ARE MUCH BETTER EQUIPPED THAN WE HAD EXPECTED, BUT I HAVE AN IDEA.





ONE THING THAT MY TIME IN THE TOKYO UNDERGROUND TAUGHT ME: CRIMINALS RARELY BACK DOWN WHEN THREATENED WITH ARREST. GANGSTERS, BY THEIR VERY NATURE, DO NOT FEAR PRISON CELLS.



BUT THEY RESPECT A STRONG MESSAGE. IT JUST TAKES SOMEONE WITH AS MUCH WILLPOWER AS THEM TO DELIVER IT.



LIKE A VIRUS THROUGH A NERVOUS SYSTEM, NEWS SPREADS QUICKLY IN THE UNDERGROUND... AND RUMORS SPREAD EVEN FASTER.

AFTER TONIGHT, NO ONE WILL DARE TO MAKE AN ATTEMPT ON AYAMI'S LIFE EVER AGAIN.



NOT AFTER THEY FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS TO MONSTERS WHO PREY ON LITTLE GIRLS.



CIAO, STRONZO.



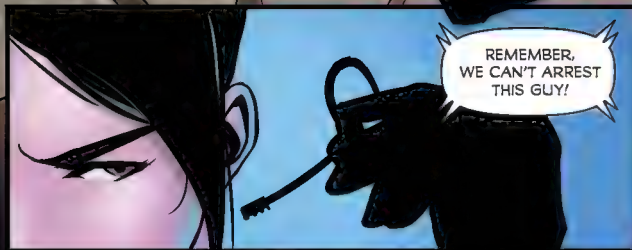


AHHHH!

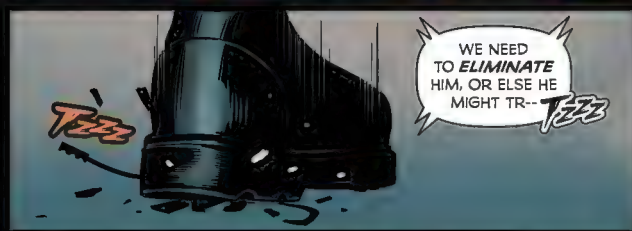


MACK, THE TARGET IS DOWN. IF POLICE OR SECURITY ARE IN THE AREA, I NEED YOU TO DRAW THEM AWAY FROM THE ALLEY WHILE I FINISH UP HERE.

FINISH UP? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

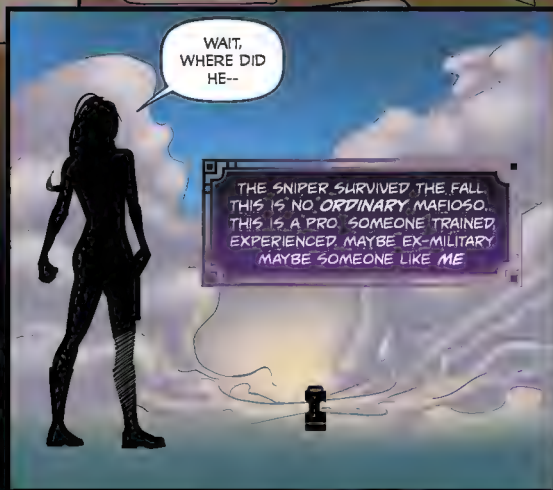


REMEMBER, WE CAN'T ARREST THIS GUY!



WE NEED TO **ELIMINATE** HIM, OR ELSE HE MIGHT TR--

TZZ



WAIT, WHERE DID HE--

THE SNIPER SURVIVED THE FALL. THIS IS NO **ORDINARY** MAFIOSO. THIS IS A PRO. SOMEONE TRAINED, EXPERIENCED, MAYBE EX-MILITARY. MAYBE SOMEONE LIKE ME



KAFF!  
KAFF!

THE SMOKE GRENADE  
BURNED MY LUNGS LIKE  
MUSTARD GAS... STABBED  
AT MY EYES LIKE A PAIR  
OF SYRINGES.

WHOK

IN THE HAZE,  
EVERYTHING MOVED IN  
FAST FORWARD. I WAS A  
FRACTION OF A SECOND  
BEHIND WITH EVERY  
MOVEMENT.

AMATEUR  
MOVE FOLLOWING ME  
WITH NO BACK-UP.

THE SHOTS CAME  
FROM EVERYWHERE.  
THERE WAS ONLY ONE ASSAILANT.  
BUT I FELT LIKE I WAS  
SURROUNDED.

KRAANKK

I DON'T KNOW  
HOW MUCH THEY'RE  
PAYING YOU FOR THIS  
HIT, BUT YOU WON'T  
LIVE LONG ENOUGH  
TO CASH YOUR  
CHECK.

OOOF!

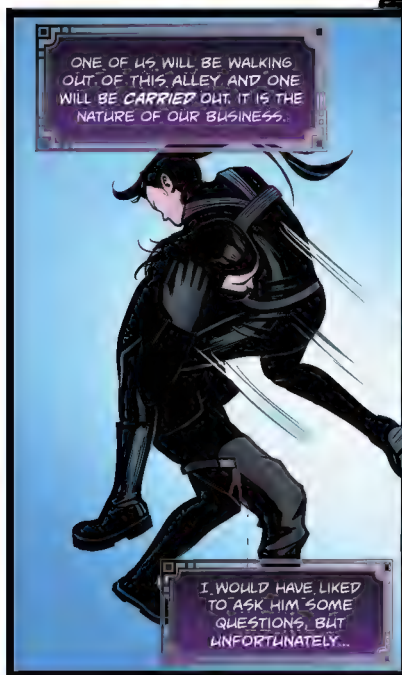
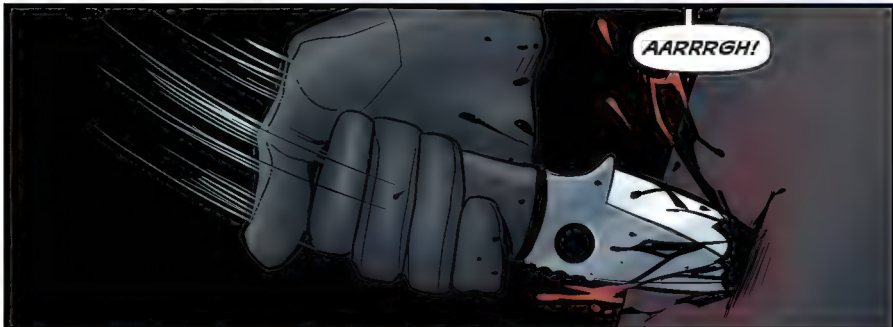
UNFORTUNATELY  
FOR YOU, I HAVE A LICENSE  
TO KILL... AND I'M **REALLY**  
GOOD AT MY JOB.

ZZZZZIIIP





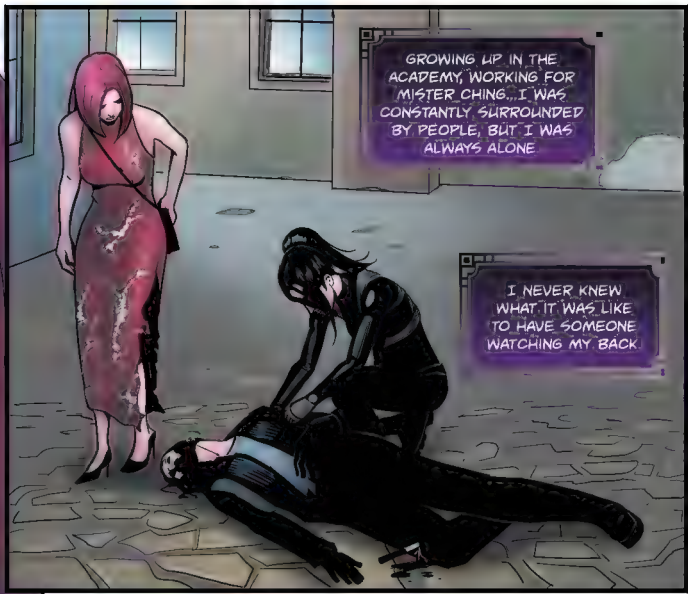








WHOOOOA...  
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME  
I'VE EVER SEEN THIS. UP  
CLOSE, I MEAN. THIS IS...  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO  
SAY. CONGRATULATIONS,  
MAYBE?







UNLESS THIS WAS THE PLAN ALL ALONG, TO HAVE **TWO** TEAMS, IN OPPOSITION. ONE TEAM WOULD EVENTUALLY FIND THE OTHER, AND THIS WOULD BE INEVITABLE.

YOU'RE SAYING SOMEONE WANTED YOU TO KILL THIS HOUSER GUY FROM AMERIGUARD?



BEFORE YOU THREW THE KNIFE THERE WAS A MOMENT...A SECOND OF HESITATION. YOU LOOKED INTO HOUSER'S EYES...YOU **RECOGNIZED** HIM.

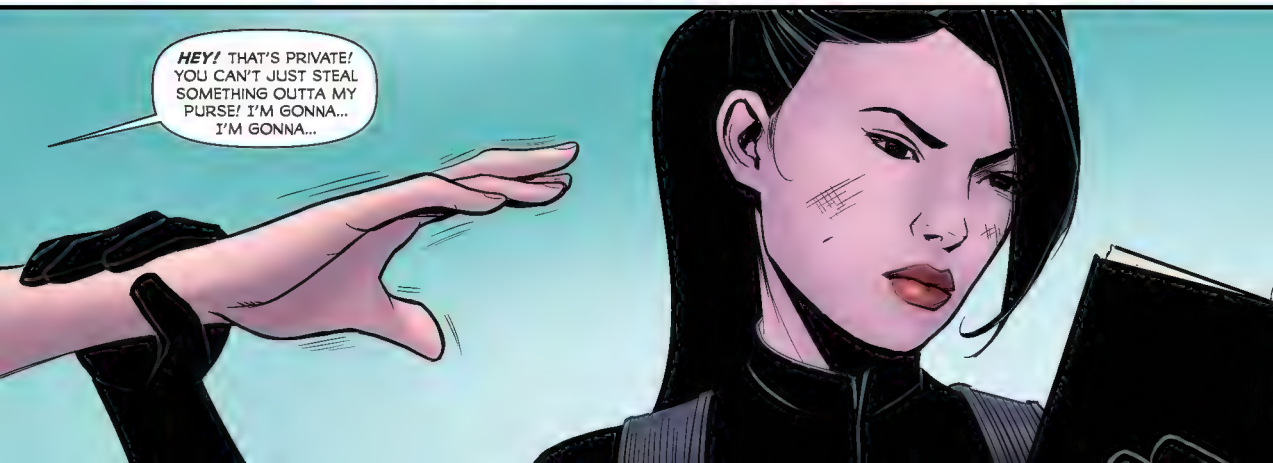


WHAT? NO, OF COURSE NOT! I HESITATED BECAUSE I WAS **SCARED**. I WAS JUST...IT WAS FEAR. THAT'S ALL.

I THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE FEARLESS. COTARD'S DELUSION, REMEMBER?



IF YOU ARE NOT GOING TO TELL ME THE TRUTH, MAYBE YOUR LITTLE BOOK **WILL**. I WILL NOT WORK FOR **MAGNI** ANY LONGER WHILE I AM BEING DECEIVED.



**HEY!** THAT'S PRIVATE! YOU CAN'T JUST STEAL SOMETHING OUTTA MY PURSE! I'M GONNA... I'M GONNA...



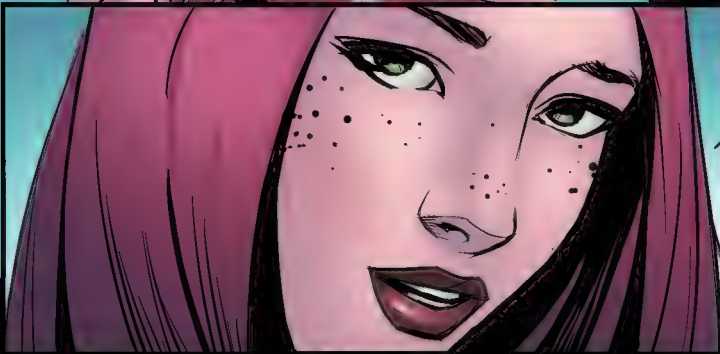


WHAT *IS* THIS? 'ASSASSINATE AN ASSASSIN'? YOU KNEW EXACTLY WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN HERE TONIGHT, AND YOU DID NOT TELL ME! YOU PUT ALL OUR LIVES IN DANGER, INCLUDING AYAMI'S.



AYAMI'S LIFE WAS NEVER IN DANGER. YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO *THINK* THAT THE AMERIGUARD SNIPER WAS GOING TO TAKE HER OUT, AND THEN ELIMINATE HIM. AND YOU SUCCEEDED.

THIS IS HOW MAGNI WORKS: THEY USE SENIOR EMPLOYEES LIKE ME TO MONITOR NEW AGENTS. TO SHADOW THEM, KEEP THEM IN CHECK. IF THEY FAIL TO FOLLOW ORDERS, THEN... WELL...



THEN WHAT, MACK? THEN WE GET SENT TO HUMAN RESOURCES? YOU DO NOT FEAR DEATH, YET YOU FEAR MAGNI... YOU FEAR WHAT HE CAN DO TO YOU.



I SUGGEST YOU GET TO AN EMBASSY OR AN AIRFIELD BEFORE THE ITALIANS LOCK THINGS DOWN.

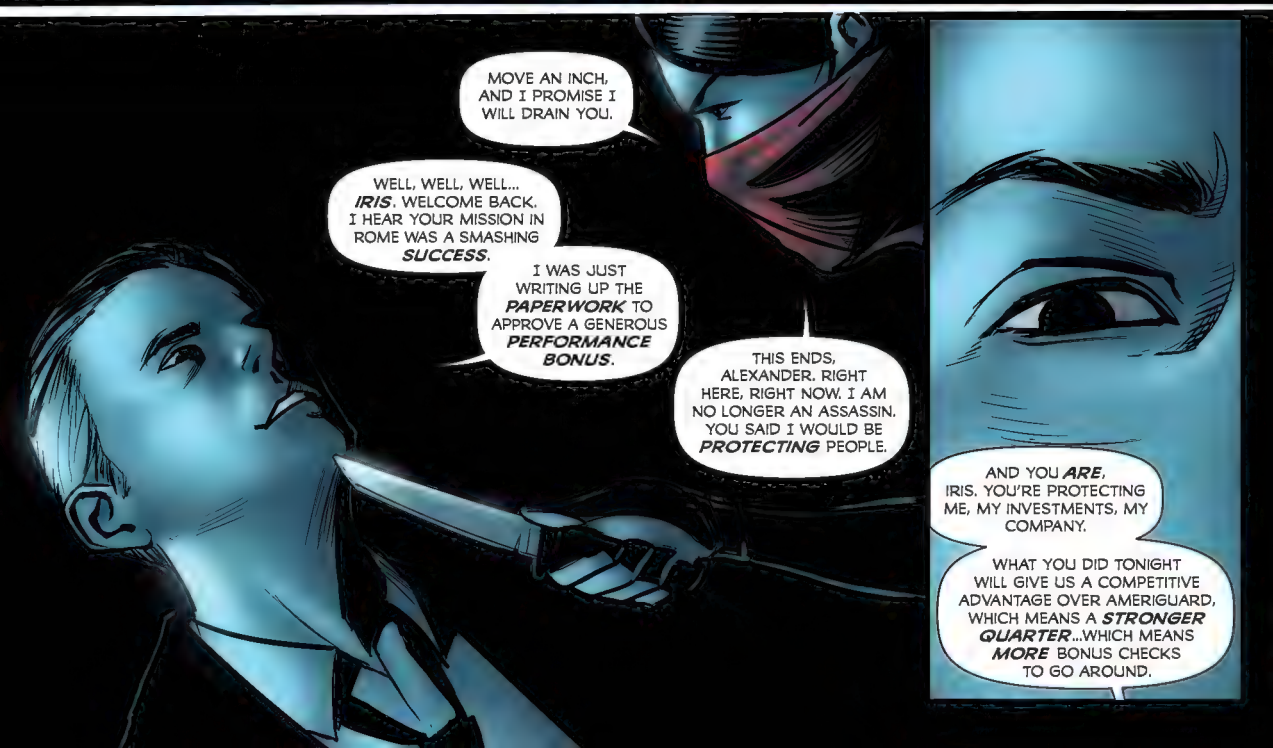
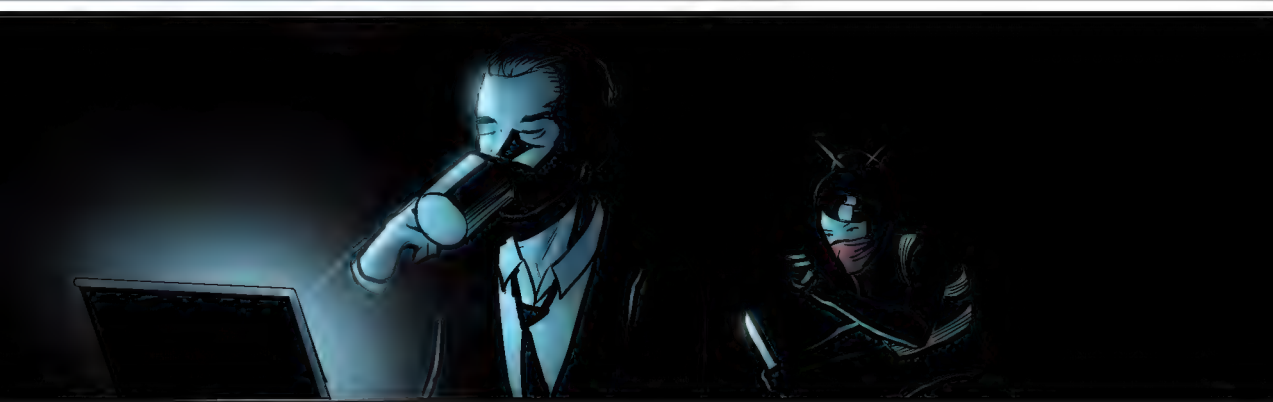
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?



HAND IN MY RESIGNATION.

**BROOM VROOM**





MOVE AN INCH,  
AND I PROMISE I  
WILL DRAIN YOU.

WELL, WELL, WELL...  
*IRIS*, WELCOME BACK.  
I HEAR YOUR MISSION IN  
ROME WAS A SMASHING  
*SUCCESS*.

I WAS JUST  
WRITING UP THE  
*PAPERWORK* TO  
APPROVE A GENEROUS  
*PERFORMANCE*  
*BONUS*.

THIS ENDS,  
ALEXANDER. RIGHT  
HERE, RIGHT NOW. I AM  
NO LONGER AN ASSASSIN.  
YOU SAID I WOULD BE  
*PROTECTING* PEOPLE.

AND YOU *ARE*,  
*IRIS*. YOU'RE PROTECTING  
ME, MY INVESTMENTS, MY  
COMPANY.

WHAT YOU DID TONIGHT  
WILL GIVE US A COMPETITIVE  
ADVANTAGE OVER AMERIGUARD,  
WHICH MEANS A *STRONGER*  
*QUARTER*...WHICH MEANS  
*MORE* BONUS CHECKS  
TO GO AROUND.



WHO DID I KILL  
TONIGHT, ALEX? WHO IS  
**CADE HOUSER?**

I AM NOT A  
WEAPON FOR YOU TO  
POINT AT YOUR ENEMIES OUT  
OF SPITE. AND I AM NOT  
HERE TO EXACT  
VENGEANCE.

THREATEN ME ALL  
YOU WANT, SWEETHEART.  
BUT YOU'RE HERE TO DO  
WHATEVER THE HELL I  
WANT YOU TO DO.

I  
OWN  
YOU.

POOR  
CHOICE OF  
WORDS.

WHOK

I CHANGED MY  
MIND. CUTTING  
YOUR THROAT IS  
TOO HUMANE.

WAIT...  
IRIS...  
PLEASE...

A DEVOTED HUSBAND  
AND FATHER OF THREE WHO  
LIVES IN PALO ALTO...WHO  
ALSO USED TO BE UNDER  
MY EMPLOY.

HE RESIGNED  
FROM MAGNI TO  
GO FREELANCE, AND  
TOOK SOME VALUABLE  
CLIENTS ALONG  
WITH HIM.





STAND  
AND FACE ME,  
ALEX.

LISTEN...  
YOU'RE MAKING  
A *MISTAKE*.



NO, I AM ABOUT TO  
MAKE THE FIRST RATIONAL  
DECISION THAT I HAVE MADE  
IN A LONG TIME. GOODBYE,  
MISTER MAGNI.

KILL ME,  
AND YOU'LL GO  
TO *PRISON*.

WE HAVE REAL-TIME  
DNA COLLECTORS BUILT INTO  
THE VENTILATION, NIGHT-VISION  
CAMERAS, RETINAL SCANNERS...  
OUR SYSTEM HAS BEEN  
RECORDING YOU SINCE THE  
MOMENT YOU BROKE IN.



*EVERYTHING*  
IS BEING RECORDED  
AND DOCUMENTED. KILL  
ME AND YOU'LL BE IN  
HANDCUFFS BEFORE  
MY BODY IS COLD.

WITHOUT ME, THE  
SHAREHOLDERS WILL VOTE  
SOMEONE ELSE INTO POWER.  
BY NOON TOMORROW I'LL BE  
REPLACED, AND IT'LL BE  
BUSINESS AS USUAL.

MY NAME MIGHT BE  
ON THE STATIONARY, BUT  
I'M *NOT MAGNI*. MAGNI IS  
A BANK ACCOUNT WITH BILLIONS  
OF DOLLARS. IT'S A BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS. IT'S  
SHAREHOLDERS. WE'RE  
*UNTOUCHABLE*.



THINK I DON'T  
KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO  
YOUR OLD BOSS, MR. CHING?  
THAT YOU STUCK A KATANA  
IN HIS WINDPIPE WHEN HE  
CROSSED YOU?

I WOULDN'T  
HAVE HIRED YOU IF I  
THOUGHT I COULD BE  
*IN* THAT POSITION.

MY CONTRACT  
SAYS I CAN WALK  
AWAY AT ANY TIME.







**NEXT ISSUE:**  
**IRIS GOES INTO HOSTILE TERRITORY... AND ONE WRONG MOVE COULD RE-IGNITE THE COLD WAR!**





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## CHAPTER FOUR

*The story so far.*

Alexander Magni exposed his true colors, using Mack and an operational war between his company and Ameriguard to advance his business interests. However, Iris discovered his true intent and attempted to sever all ties with Magni Corp, but was unable to do so under threat of murder if she walked.

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I'M GOING TO RUN SOME **CALIBRATION** QUESTIONS. NAME?

IRIS.



OCCUPATION?

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.



ARE YOU LOYAL TO THE MAGNI CORPORATION?

DR. ZYRA, I AM NOT. AND I NEVER WILL BE.



PRIOR TO YOUR EMPLOYMENT HERE, YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDED YOU-- ASSASSINATIONS, DISMANTLING CRIME SYNDICATES, TAKING OUT **TWO** YAKUZA CLANS IN THE SAME NIGHT.

YOU WERE QUALIFIED, BUT I **ASSUMED** YOU'D ALSO BE A TEAM PLAYER. YOUR HISTORY INDICATES YOU WERE COMPLIANT... **OBEDIENT.**

PEOPLE CHANGE.



EVIDENTLY, AND NOW SINCE MISTER MAGNI CAN'T TRUST YOU ANYMORE, **I'M** IN THE AWKWARD POSITION OF TAKING YOU THROUGH THESE POST-MISSION DEBRIEFS... ALL **WITHOUT** OVERTIME PAY, MIGHT I ADD.

IS THAT WHAT THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE-- A **DEBRIEF**? IT FEELS MORE LIKE AN INTERROGATION.



IT'S TO KEEP YOU HONEST. THIS DEVICE TAKES **HUNDREDS** OF BIOMETRIC READINGS. YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO DECEIVE US, BUT **NO ONE** OUTSMARTS THE MACHINE.

I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE.

FAIR ENOUGH. LET'S START RIGHT AT THE BEGINNING, THEN...



"...AT THE MOMENT YOU LANDED IN **RUSSIA**."



DARN! IT'S A LOT COLDER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE. I SHOULD'VE WORN A SCARF... OR **THERMAL UNDERWEAR**.

I HAVE A FEELING THIS IS GOING TO BE BAD NEWS.



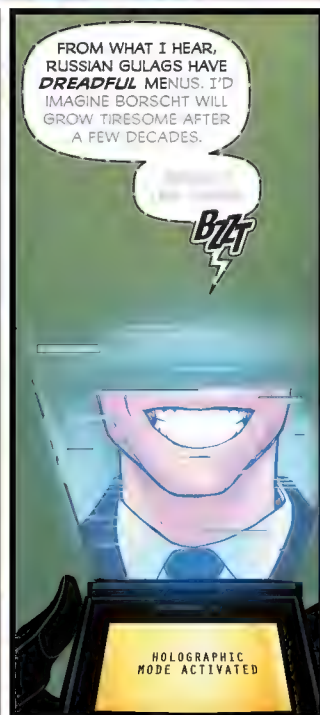
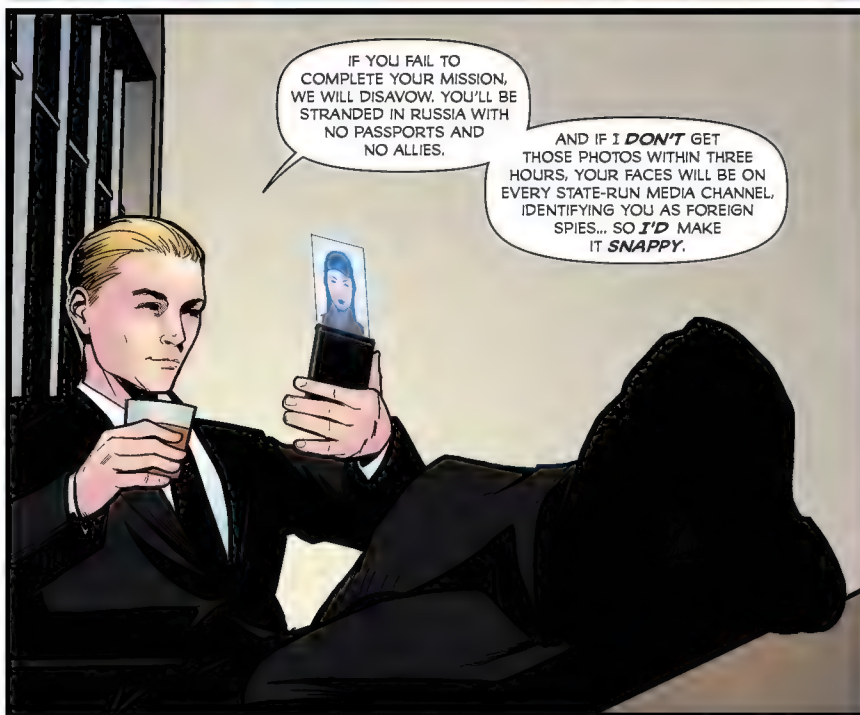
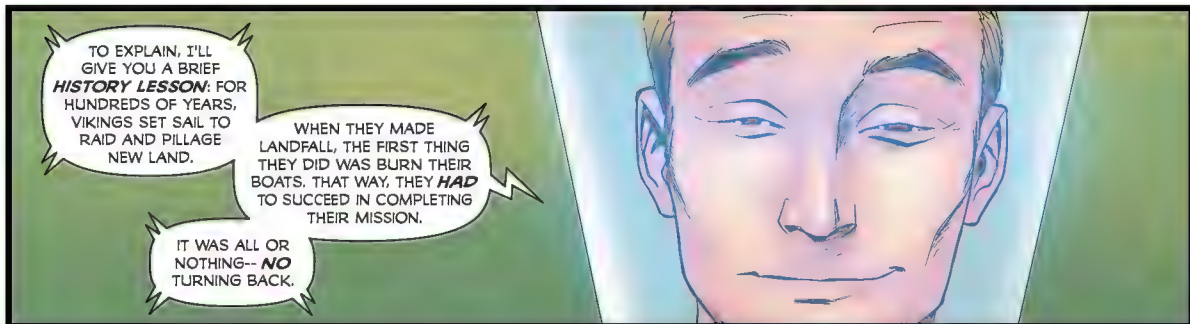
NO COMPLAINTS.

IRIS! I TRUST THE FLIGHT WAS TO YOUR SATISFACTION?

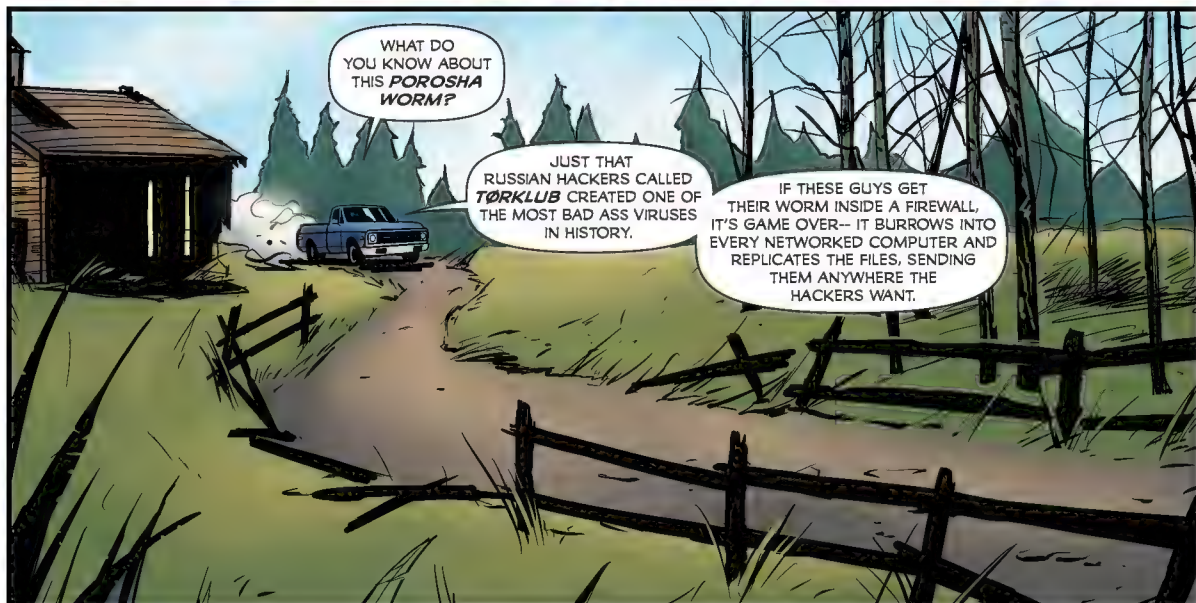
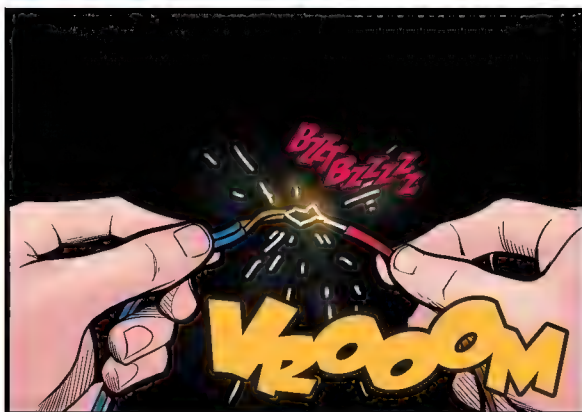
AH, SPLENDID. AND SINCE THIS IS YOUR FIRST MISSION WHILE UNDER STRICT **PROBATION**, I FELT THE TIMING WAS RIGHT TO LAY DOWN THE NEW GROUND RULES.

AFTER ALL, I CAN'T HAVE THE INMATES RUNNING THE ASYLUM, CAN I?

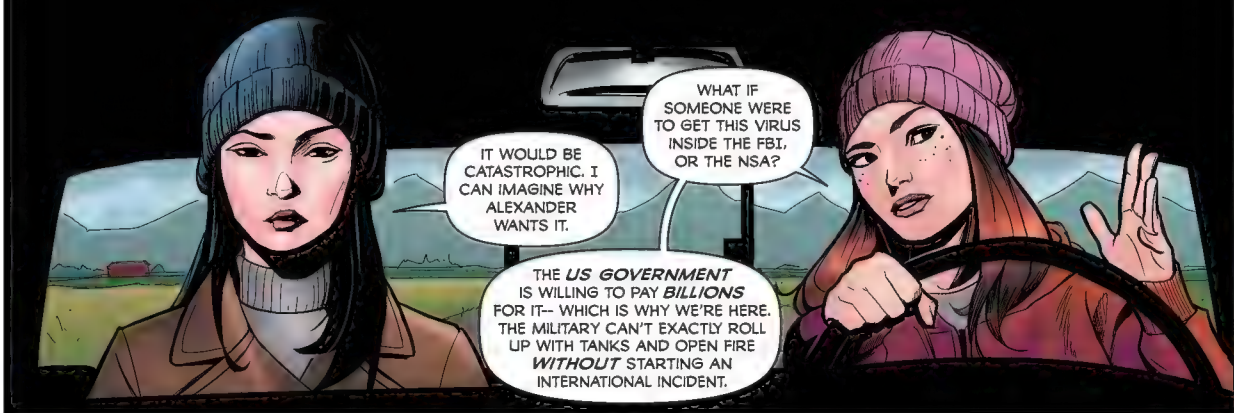












IT WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC. I CAN IMAGINE WHY ALEXANDER WANTS IT.

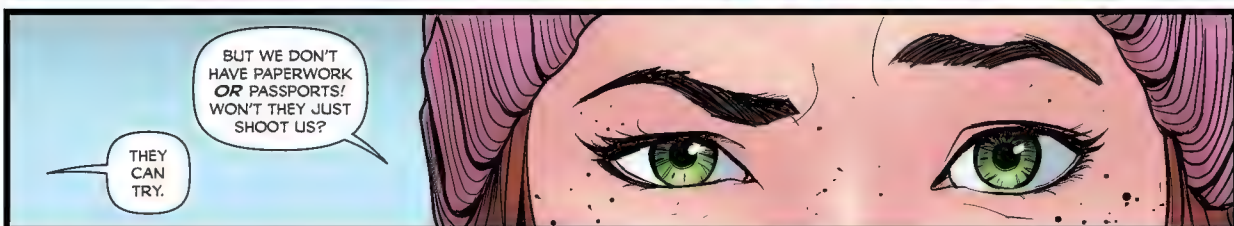
WHAT IF SOMEONE WERE TO GET THIS VIRUS INSIDE THE FBI, OR THE NSA?

THE *US* GOVERNMENT IS WILLING TO PAY *BILLIONS* FOR IT-- WHICH IS WHY WE'RE HERE. THE MILITARY CAN'T EXACTLY ROLL UP WITH TANKS AND OPEN FIRE *WITHOUT* STARTING AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT.



OH, *###&...* LOOK UP AHEAD. SHOULD I TURN AROUND? OR RAM THE GATE? I'VE *ALWAYS* WANTED TO DO THAT!

NO, THEY HAVE SURELY SPOTTED US. PULL UP, AND LEAVE THE TALKING TO ME.



BUT WE DON'T HAVE PAPERWORK OR PASSPORTS! WON'T THEY JUST SHOOT US?

THEY CAN TRY.



STOY!  
STOY!



<YOU, IN THE PASSENGER SEAT... YOU ARE *NOT* FROM AROUND HERE.>\*

WHAT GAVE ME AWAY?

\*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN





WE ARE  
TOURISTS,  
DRIVING  
UP TO--

**SCIENTISTS!**  
GEOLOGISTS,  
ACTUALLY.

AH, ENGLISH.  
AMERICANS, I  
ASSUME. WHAT IS  
YOUR BUSINESS?



STUDYING RARE-EARTH  
METALS, MINERALS, THAT  
KINDA STUFF. MY FRIEND  
HERE IS THE BEST IN THE BIZ...  
AT THE OFFICE THEY CALL  
HER A 'ROCK STAR'.



IT IS A LITTLE FAR  
NORTH FOR TOURISTS,  
AND I HAVE NOT BEEN  
NOTIFIED OF ANY SCIENTISTS  
COMING THIS WAY. SHOW  
ME YOUR PASSPORTS.

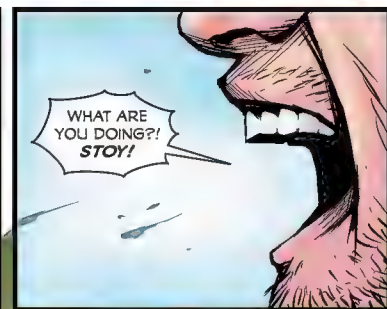
MY FRIEND HERE  
WAS **JOKING**. HER  
BIG MOUTH AND SAD  
ATTEMPTS AT HUMOR  
OFTEN GET HER  
INTO TROUBLE.



TURN OFF  
YOUR ENGINE AND  
STEP OUT OF THE  
VEHICLE.

I CAN CLEAR  
THIS UP IF YOU WILL  
ALLOW ME TO--

IT IS TOO  
LATE FOR THAT.  
TURN OFF YOUR  
ENGINE, NOW.



WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING?!  
**STOY!**



**GET YOUR  
HAND OUT OF  
YOUR JACKET!**

**PREPARE  
TO FIRE!**





I THINK YOU WILL FIND THAT ALL OF MY PAPERWORK IS IN ORDER.



HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT WOULD WORK?

THIS IS *NOT* MY FIRST TIME IN SIBERIA. DISPUTES CAN ALWAYS BE SOLVED WITH ONE OF TWO THINGS: RUSSIAN VODKA OR AMERICAN DOLLARS.



WHY DO YOU WORK FOR HIM? THE MAN IS A MONSTER.

CAREFUL, YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND A LITTLE LIKE MISTER MAGNI.

THE SAME REASON *YOU* ARE: A CORNER OFFICE AND A KILLER 401K. AND THE FACT THAT ONCE YOU'RE IN, YOU'RE IN FOR LIFE... I'VE HEARD WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AGENTS HAND IN THEIR RESIGNATIONS.



BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. IF YOU AND I WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN DESTROY THE *ENTIRE SYSTEM* AND TAKE ALEXANDER DOWN WITH IT. I HAVE A PLAN THAT WOULD--

STOP TALKING! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THIS! I WANT *PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY*. SO IF THEY ASK IF YOU TRIED TO COERCE ME, I CAN HONESTLY SA--

"WAIT A MOMENT, IRIS. LET'S TAKE A BREAK IN THE PROCEEDINGS."





IS THERE A PROBLEM?

A **PROBLEM**? YOU JUST ADMITTED THAT YOU TRIED TO COERCE A FELLOW EMPLOYEE INTO DESTROYING THE COMPANY YOU WORK FOR.



AND?

AND THIS IS SOMETHING I'M OBLIGATED TO PUT IN MY REPORT! I HAVE TO TELL MISTER MAGNI YOU'RE PLANNING TO TAKE DOWN HIS ENTIRE CORPORATION... DESTROY HIS LEGACY!

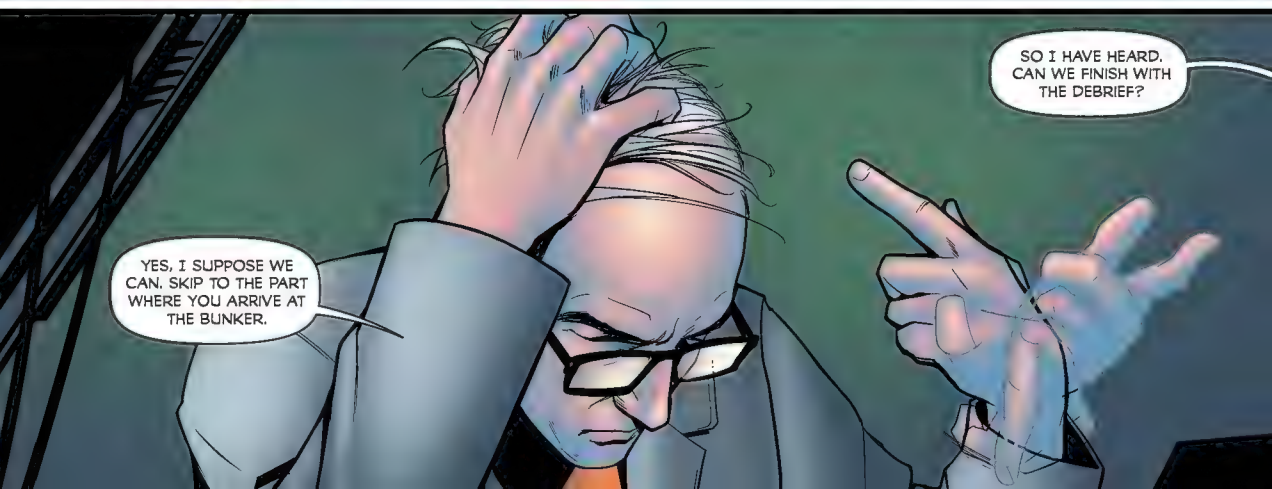


I ALMOST TOOK HIS HEAD OFF WITH A KATANA LAST MONTH. I DOUBT HE WILL BE SHOCKED BY THIS REVELATION.

YOU MIGHT NOT BE AS COMPLIANT AS YOU ONCE WERE, BUT YOU **WILL** LEARN TO RESPECT THIS COMPANY.

AND NEED I REMIND YOU THAT IF YOU KILL MISTER MAGNI, OR MYSELF, OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYEE AT MAGNI CORP, WE'LL SIMPLY BE REPLACED...AND **YOU'LL** BE IN PRISON.

MAGNI'S STOCK WILL CONTINUE TO CLIMB NO MATTER **HOW** MANY PEOPLE YOU STAB.



SO I HAVE HEARD. CAN WE FINISH WITH THE DEBRIEF?

YES, I SUPPOSE WE CAN. SKIP TO THE PART WHERE YOU ARRIVE AT THE BUNKER.





SOMEONE SHOULD  
TELL THE HOMEOWNERS THEIR  
FLAG IS A FEW DECADES OUT  
OF STYLE.



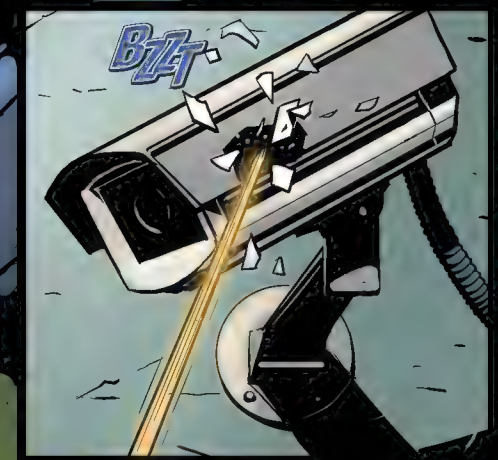
SO, HOW DO WE  
GET IN? I DON'T SEE A  
DOORBELL, AND SOMETHING  
TELLS ME THEY WON'T HEAR  
US KNOCKING THROUGH A  
FOOT-THICK BLAST DOOR.

THEY WILL  
NOT INVITE  
US IN.



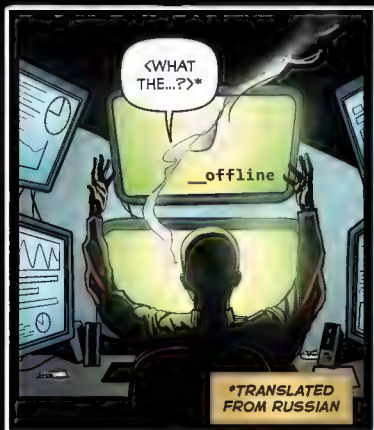
WE WILL HAVE  
TO INVITE THEM  
OUTSIDE.

**BLAM**



**BZZT**













OUR EMPLOYER  
REQUIRES THE VIRUS  
THAT YOU HAVE BEEN  
WORKING ON... NOTHING  
MORE. HAND IT OVER  
AND WE WILL SPARE  
YOUR LIVES.

IRIS, ARE YOU FREAKING  
**INSANE?** THAT'S **NOT** THE  
PLAN! THE MISSION IS TO SMOKE  
TØRKLUB, GET THE VIRUS, AND  
BURN STALIN'S SUMMER HOME  
TO THE GROUND.

I WANT TO BE ON  
A PRIVATE JET BACK TO **LA**  
WITH A WINE SPRITZER IN MY  
HAND. NOT ON A PRISON BUS  
TO A GULAG. **BEET SOUP.**  
REMEMBER?!



THIS IS **MY**  
OPERATION, MACK. NOT  
**YOURS.** YOU ARE HERE  
TO LEND SUPPORT  
AND OBSERVE.

YEAH, EXACTLY!  
AND RIGHT NOW  
I'M **OBSERVING**  
AS YOU SCREW THIS  
ENTIRE OPERATION  
RIGHT IN THE A—



**BLAM  
BLAM**



**ARGHH!**

**PK**





"HMMM... YOU RAN INTO A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF RESISTANCE FROM TØRKLUB, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? I'D IMAGINE COMPUTER HACKERS BEING MORE... *DOCILE*."

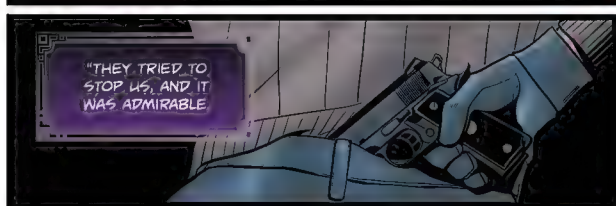


"FROM MY EXPERIENCE, PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE TO SPEND THEIR LIFE IN A DARK ROOM WEARING HEADPHONES AREN'T USUALLY ON THE *AGGRESSIVE* SIDE."

**F**IGHT OR FLIGHT.



"WE WEAR CLOTHES AND READ BOOKS AND USE CELL PHONES, BUT HUMANS ARE STILL ANIMALS. BACK US INTO A CORNER, AND WE TRY TO CLAW OUR WAY OUT."



"THEY TRIED TO STOP US, AND IT WAS ADMIRABLE."



**BLAM**



**WHOK**

"BUT LIKE A FIELD MOUSE CAUGHT IN THE TALONS OF A HAWK, IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME."

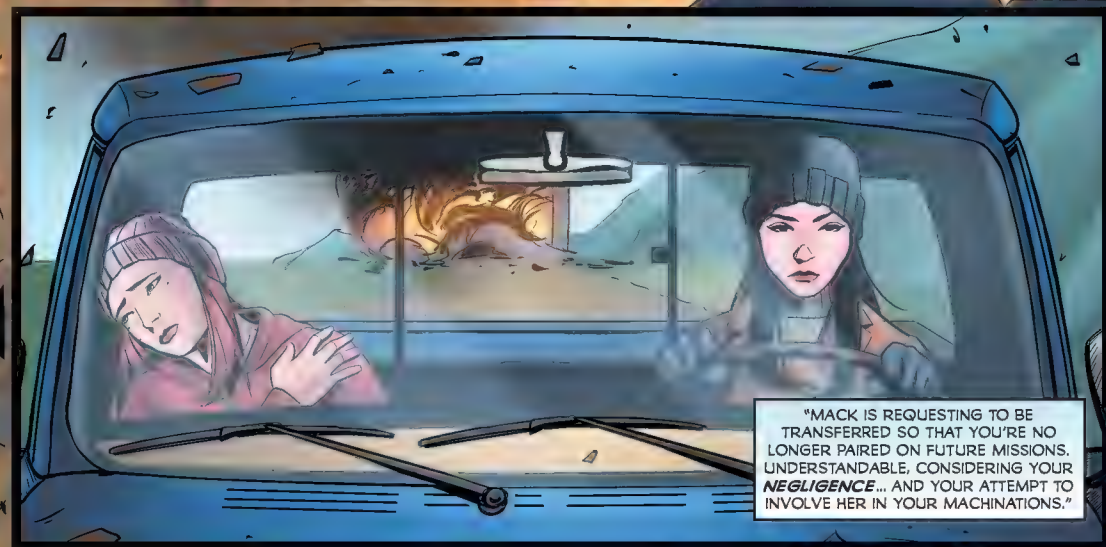


LUCKILY THE DAMAGE TO MACK'S SHOULDER WAS MINIMAL. AFTER I ELIMINATED TORKLUB, SHE WAS ABLE TO CARRY OUT PHASE THREE."



KAM

"I SAW THE SATELLITE FOOTAGE. WHEN THE RUSSIANS INVESTIGATE, THEY'LL FIND NOTHING MORE THAN RUBBLE."

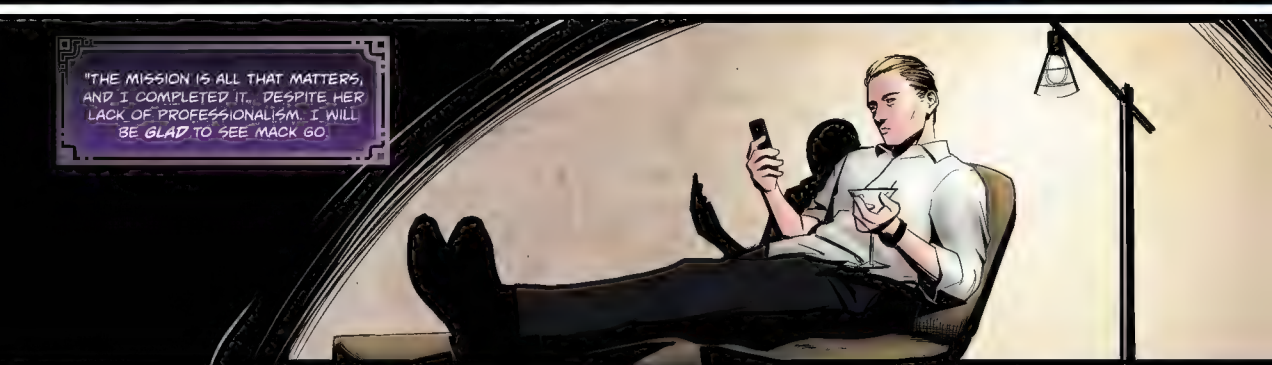


"MACK IS REQUESTING TO BE TRANSFERRED SO THAT YOU'RE NO LONGER PAIRED ON FUTURE MISSIONS. UNDERSTANDABLE, CONSIDERING YOUR **NEGLIGENCE**... AND YOUR ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE HER IN YOUR MACHINATIONS."

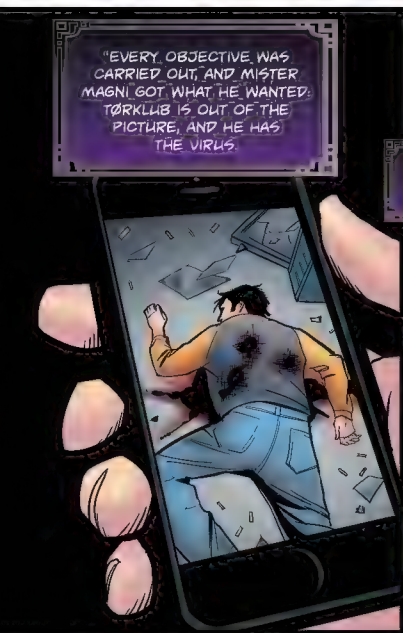




"IF HER FEELINGS WERE HURT, BY A GUNSHOT WOUND, SHE IS IN THE WRONG LINE OF WORK. HAD SHE NOT QUESTIONED ME AND CAUSED A DISTRACTION, SHE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN INJURED."



"THE MISSION IS ALL THAT MATTERS, AND I COMPLETED IT. DESPITE HER LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM, I WILL BE GLAD TO SEE MACK GO."



"EVERY OBJECTIVE WAS CARRIED OUT, AND MISTER MAGNI GOT WHAT HE WANTED. TÖRKÜB IS OUT OF THE PICTURE, AND HE HAS THE VIRUS."



"I AM SURE HE IS PLEASED."

"AND WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN SPEAK TO MISTER MAGNI'S FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR PERFORMANCE?"

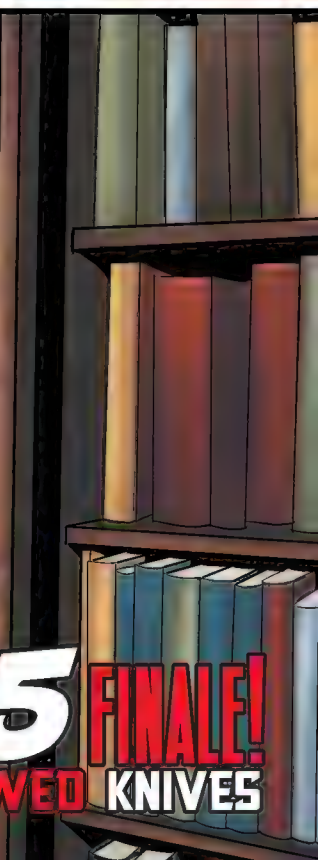
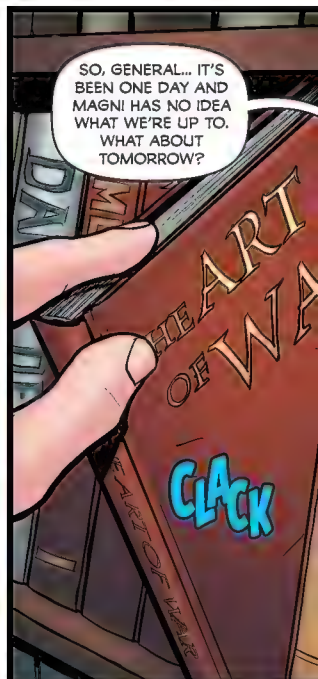


"BECAUSE HE SENT THE JET BACK FOR EXTRACTION, AND BECAUSE I AM SITTING HERE IN YOUR OFFICE AND NOT IN A SIBERIAN GULAG."









**NEXT: THE VOLUME 5 FINALE!**  
**KILLING WITH BORROWED KNIVES**





ORTHOTT : Denny TRAN  
EMALANTE Jr. : Jany

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# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

#5  
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Vol. 5  
OVER A







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Cover B

# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT iris

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OF 5







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## "Killing With Borrowed Knives"

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story

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## CHAPTER FIVE

The story so far.

Iris and Mack were successful in carrying out their mission in Russia, taking out a hacker and retrieving the virus he was working on. However, the objectives were not without consequence, as Mack took a bullet to the shoulder. Staging a breakup of their partnership, Iris and Mack made preparations to render their toughest operation yet—take out their employer Magni Corp.

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MAGNI TOWER,  
LOS ANGELES.

YOU DO  
NOT NEED TO  
DO THIS.

OF COURSE I DO.  
I'M **TRAPPED** IN THIS  
COMPANY, SAME AS YOU.  
WE EITHER FIGHT BACK NOW,  
OR WE'RE UNDER THE  
THUMB OF MAGNI  
CORP FOREVER.

THIS WILL  
BE **DANGEROUS**,  
**MACK**. PEOPLE WILL  
DIE-- MAYBE **US**.

BUT I'LL BE  
FINE, I TOLD  
YOU, I **CAN'T**  
BE KILLED.

I KNOW HOW  
CONFIDENT YOU ARE,  
BECAUSE I USED TO **BE**  
YOU. I THOUGHT I WAS  
INVINCIBLE, LIKE A  
SUPERHUMAN.

BUT THE LONGER  
YOU DO THIS JOB, YOU  
START TO FEEL MUCH LESS  
**SUPER** AND A LOT  
MORE **HUMAN**.





I KNOW YOU *BELIEVE* YOU HAVE POWERS, AND MAYBE YOU *DO*. I HAVE SEEN THINGS RECENTLY THAT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED BY SCIENCE ALONE. BUT THIS IS NOT A MISSION. THIS IS WAR. NO ONE IS SAFE.



I TOLD YOU, I'M READY. YOU HAVE THE WEAPONS, I HAVE THE BRAINS, THE PLAN IS TIGHT-- WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

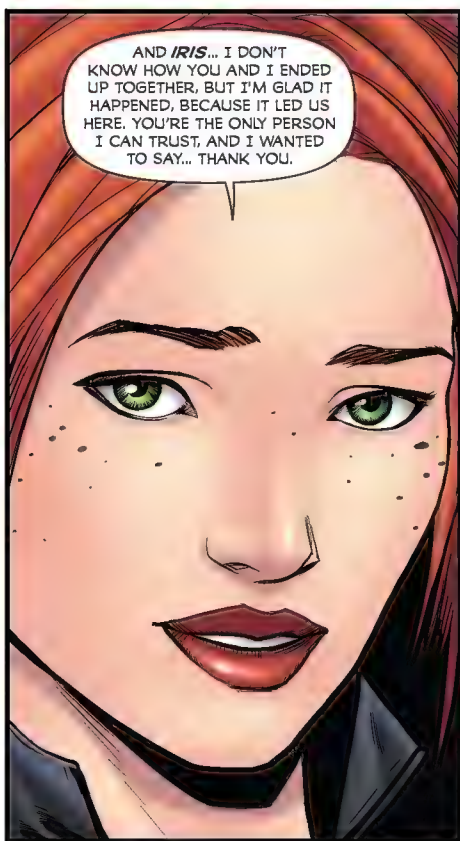


WE HAVE TO ASSUME THE SHOOTING WILL START AS SOON AS WE ENTER THE LOBBY. MOVE FAST AND GET TO THE STAIRWELL.



COPY THAT. ONCE I SET UP, I'LL BE YOUR EYES AND EARS. THE BUILDING IS LIKE ONE BIG **VIDEO CAMERA**-- NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO, I'LL HAVE YOU COVERED.

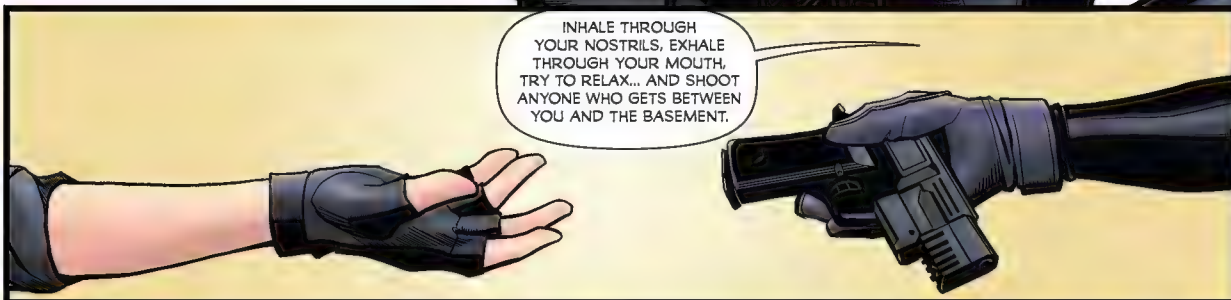




AND *IRIS*... I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU AND I ENDED UP TOGETHER, BUT I'M GLAD IT HAPPENED, BECAUSE IT LED US HERE. YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON I CAN TRUST, AND I WANTED TO SAY... THANK YOU.



ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, IN ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES THIS WILL BE OVER. THANK ME *IF* WE MAKE IT OUT.



INHALE THROUGH YOUR NOSTRILS, EXHALE THROUGH YOUR MOUTH, TRY TO RELAX... AND SHOOT ANYONE WHO GETS BETWEEN YOU AND THE BASEMENT.



GOT IT. *MINIMAL* CASUALTIES.





A FIRE ALARM HAS  
BEEN ACTIVATED. PLEASE  
**EXIT** THE BUILDING IN AN  
ORDERLY FASHION.





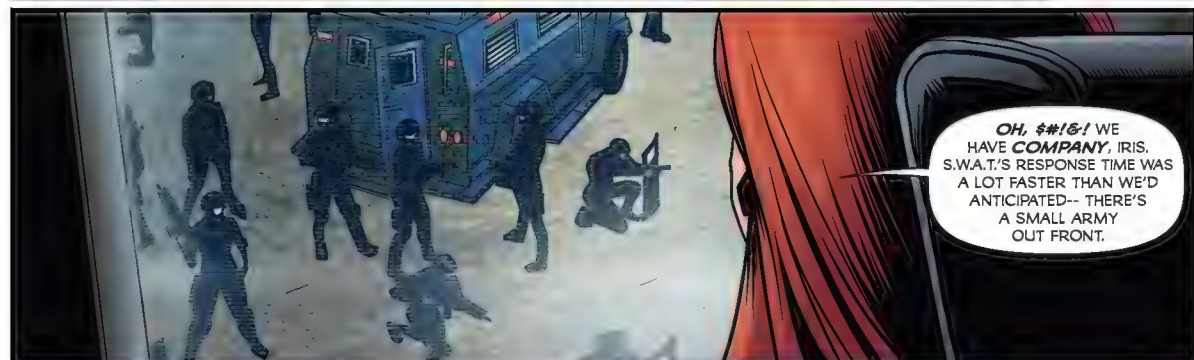






SERVER ROOM,  
SUB BASEMENT 5.

I'M PENETRATING  
THE DEFENSES... IT'LL JUST  
TAKE A FEW MINUTES FOR  
ME TO ELEVATE MY  
CREDENTIALS.



OH, \$#!\$! WE  
HAVE **COMPANY**, IRIS.  
S.W.A.T.'S RESPONSE TIME WAS  
A LOT FASTER THAN WE'D  
ANTICIPATED-- THERE'S  
A SMALL ARMY  
OUT FRONT.

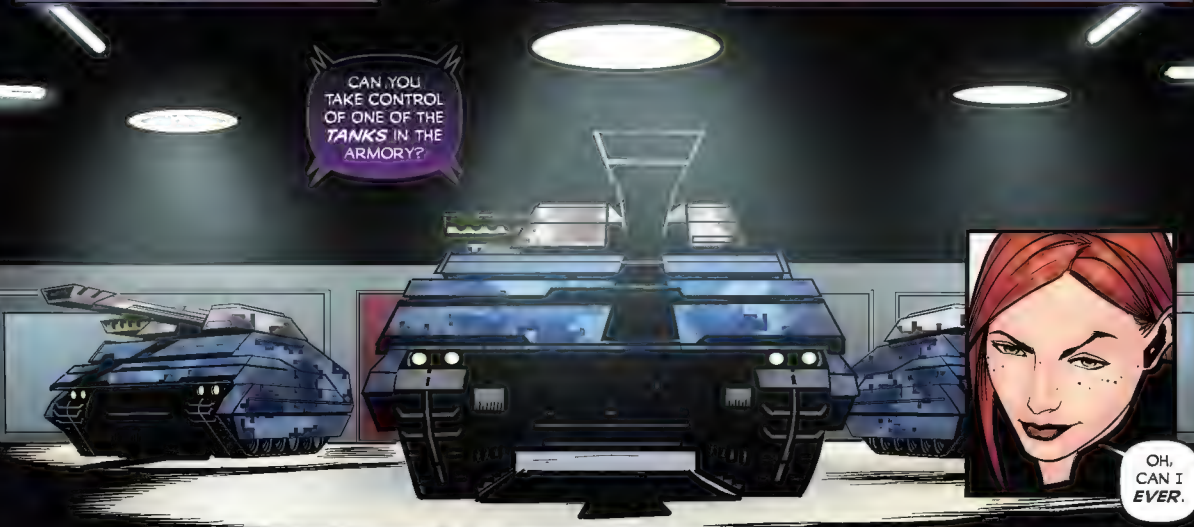


I HAVEN'T MADE  
MYSELF AN ADMINISTRATOR  
YET-- I CAN'T SHUT THE  
BLAST DOORS!

ALL OF  
MAGNI'S  
VEHICLES ARE  
**DRONE**  
PILOTED,  
RIGHT?

**BLAM**

CAN YOU  
TAKE CONTROL  
OF ONE OF THE  
**TANKS** IN THE  
ARMORY?



OH,  
CAN I  
EVER.

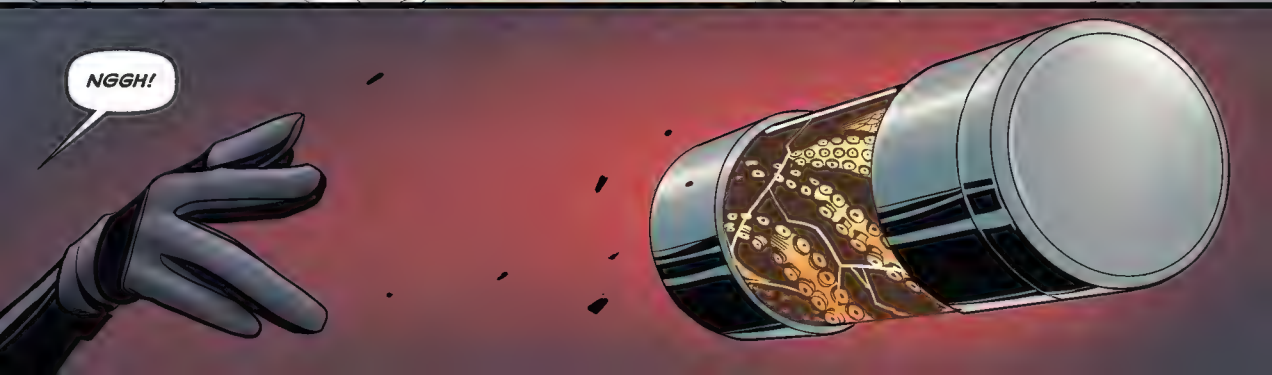
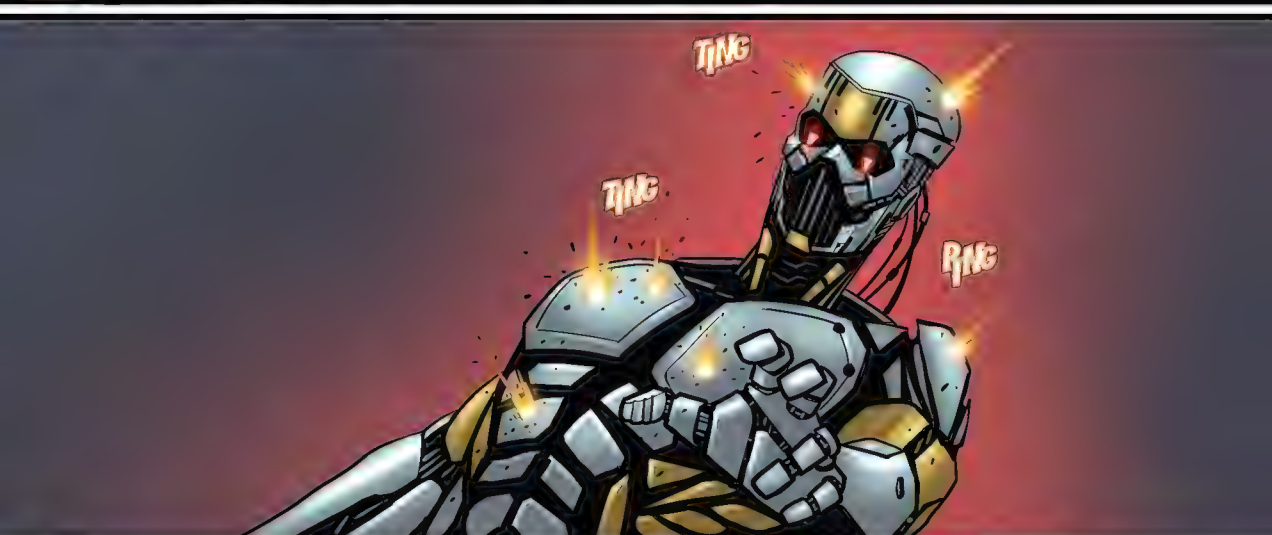














UNFORTUNATELY WE WILL NOT BE WISHING YOU THE BEST IN YOUR FUTURE ENDEAVORS, AS YOU WILL SOON BE DECEASED.

HOWEVER, AS A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE YOUR FUNERAL EXPENSES WILL BE COVERED IN FULL.

IF Y-YOU HAVE ANY F-F-FINAL WORDS... *BZZT!*  
BEFORE T-T-TERMINATION...  
*BZZT!*

KERKKZZT!





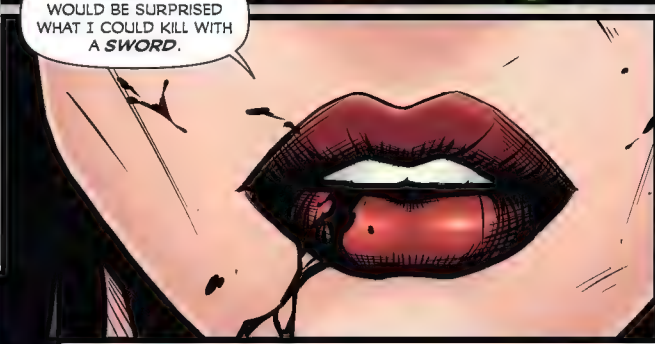
H-HOW  
DID YOU GET  
PAST *HR*?



THE *HINROTH*  
TOOK CARE OF  
YOUR *TOY*  
ROBOT.



AND *I* TOOK  
CARE OF THE  
*HINROTH*.  
  
I *SAID* YOU  
WOULD BE SURPRISED  
WHAT I COULD KILL WITH  
A *SWORD*.



IS  
THAT  
SO?

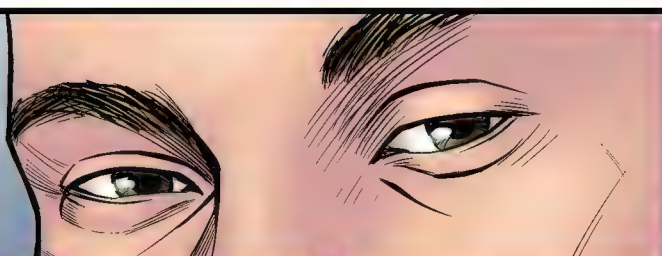
WELL, I CAN'T SAY  
I'M NOT IMPRESSED... BUT THIS  
CHANGES NOTHING. YOU MIGHT'VE  
DELAYED THE S.W.A.T. TEAM, TAKEN  
OUT SECURITY AND EVEN GOTTEN  
PAST *HR*, BUT IT WAS ALL  
FOR *NOTHING*.



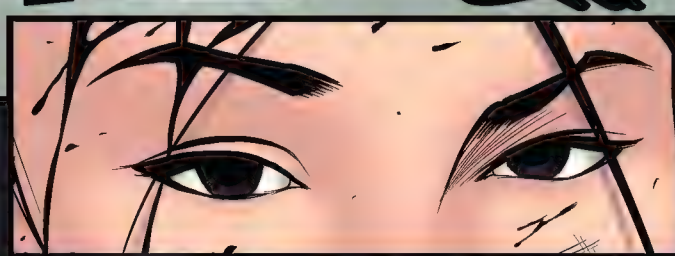




KILL ME AND YOU'RE  
IN PRISON FOR LIFE...  
AND SOMEONE *JUST* LIKE  
ME COMES AND SITS  
IN THIS CHAIR.



WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS  
BEFORE: *BILLIONS* IN STOCKS,  
REMEMBER? MAGNI CORP IS  
UNKILLABLE. BUSINESS CARRIES  
ON WITH OR WITHOUT ME. AND  
YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED  
*NOTHING*.



IT LOOKS LIKE  
YOU HAVE EVERYTHING  
FIGURED OUT.

BUT YOU ARE  
WRONG ABOUT ONE  
THING: I AM *NOT* HERE  
TO KILL YOU. I AM  
HERE TO GIVE YOU A  
*HISTORY LESSON*.

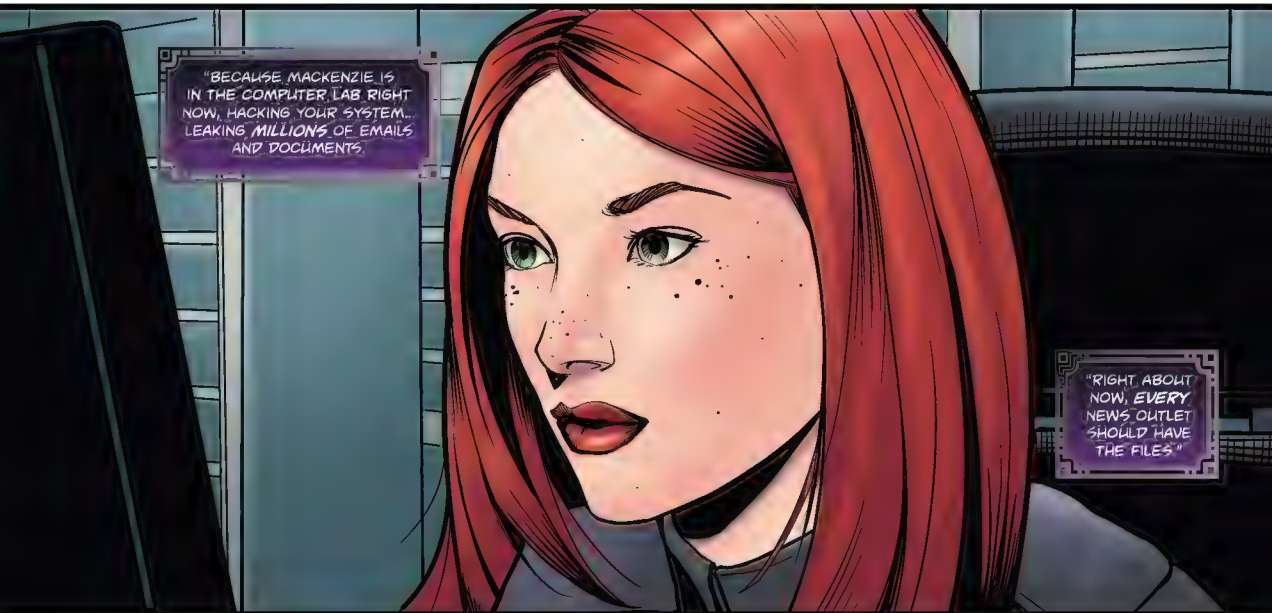


YOU KNOW HOW I TOOK OUT  
TWO YAKUZA CLANS, SINGLE-  
HANDEDLY, IN THE SAME NIGHT?  
IT WAS NOT WITH A SWORD OR  
A GUN. IT WAS WITH A *RUMOR*.













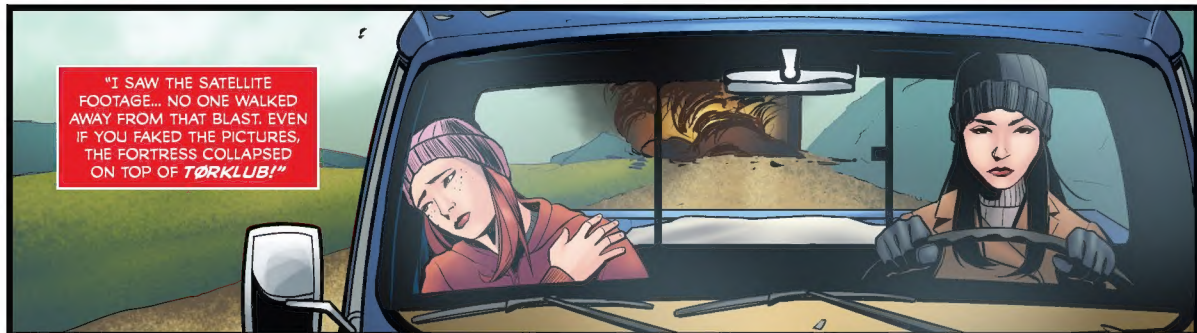
"NO, ALEX. YOU SAW EXACTLY WHAT I WANTED YOU TO SEE."



"AFTER THEY MADE A COPY OF THE COMPUTER VIRUS FOR US, THE HACKERS POSED FOR A PHOTO SHOOT."



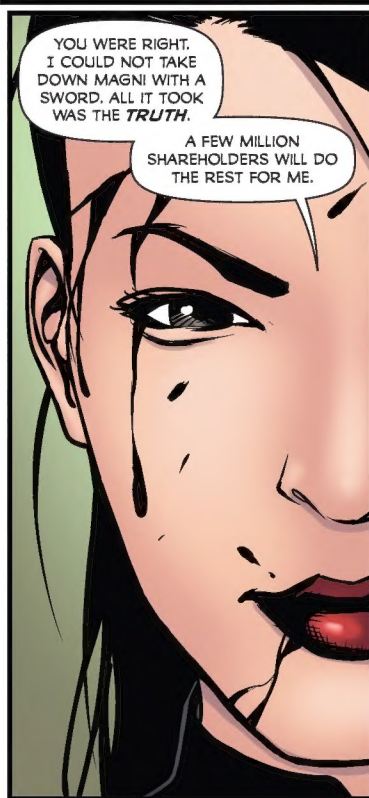
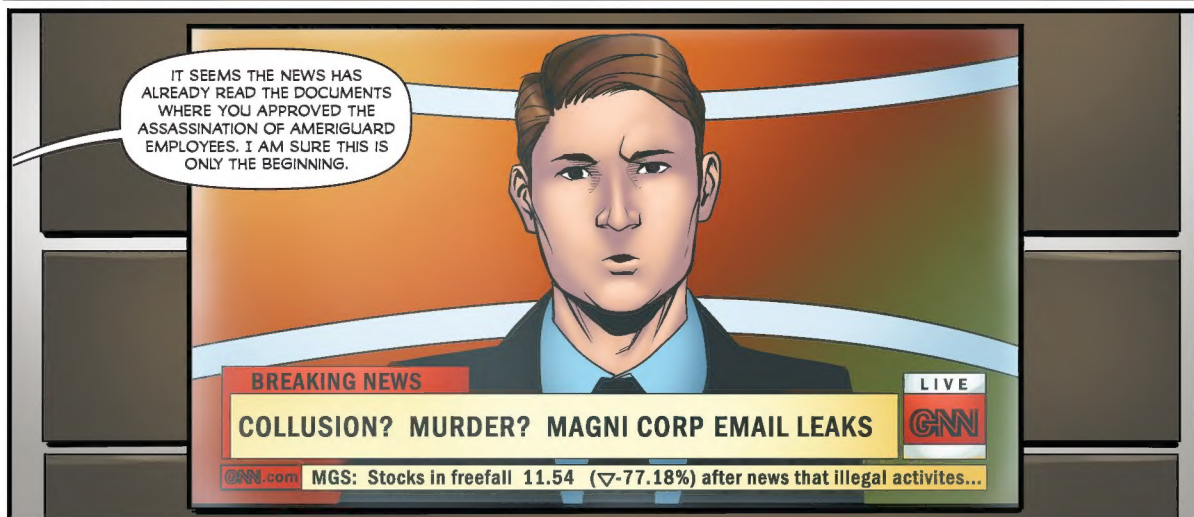
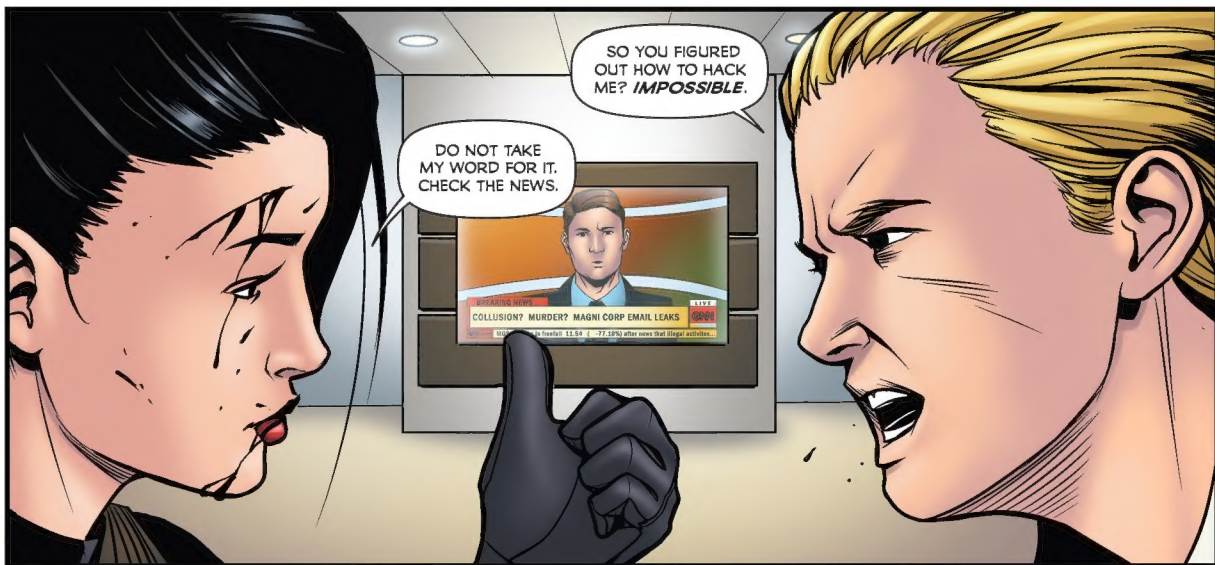
"I SAW THE SATELLITE FOOTAGE... NO ONE WALKED AWAY FROM THAT BLAST. EVEN IF YOU FAKED THE PICTURES, THE FORTRESS COLLAPSED ON TOP OF **TORKLUB!**"



"THE FORTRESS COLLAPSED... BUT NOT ON TOP OF ANYONE."











I could watch Iris do this all day. She's ruthless, aggressive. Aggression has it's uses.



Magni's stock continued to plummet, falling at record speeds.

Within a week, half their employees would be arrested. Chapter Seven was just around the corner.



And just like we planned, it all came crashing down.



IT IS OVER, MACK. WE ARE FREE.

Iris went freelance again, disappearing back into the underworld. Tokyo, Prague, Sydney... she could be anywhere by now.



